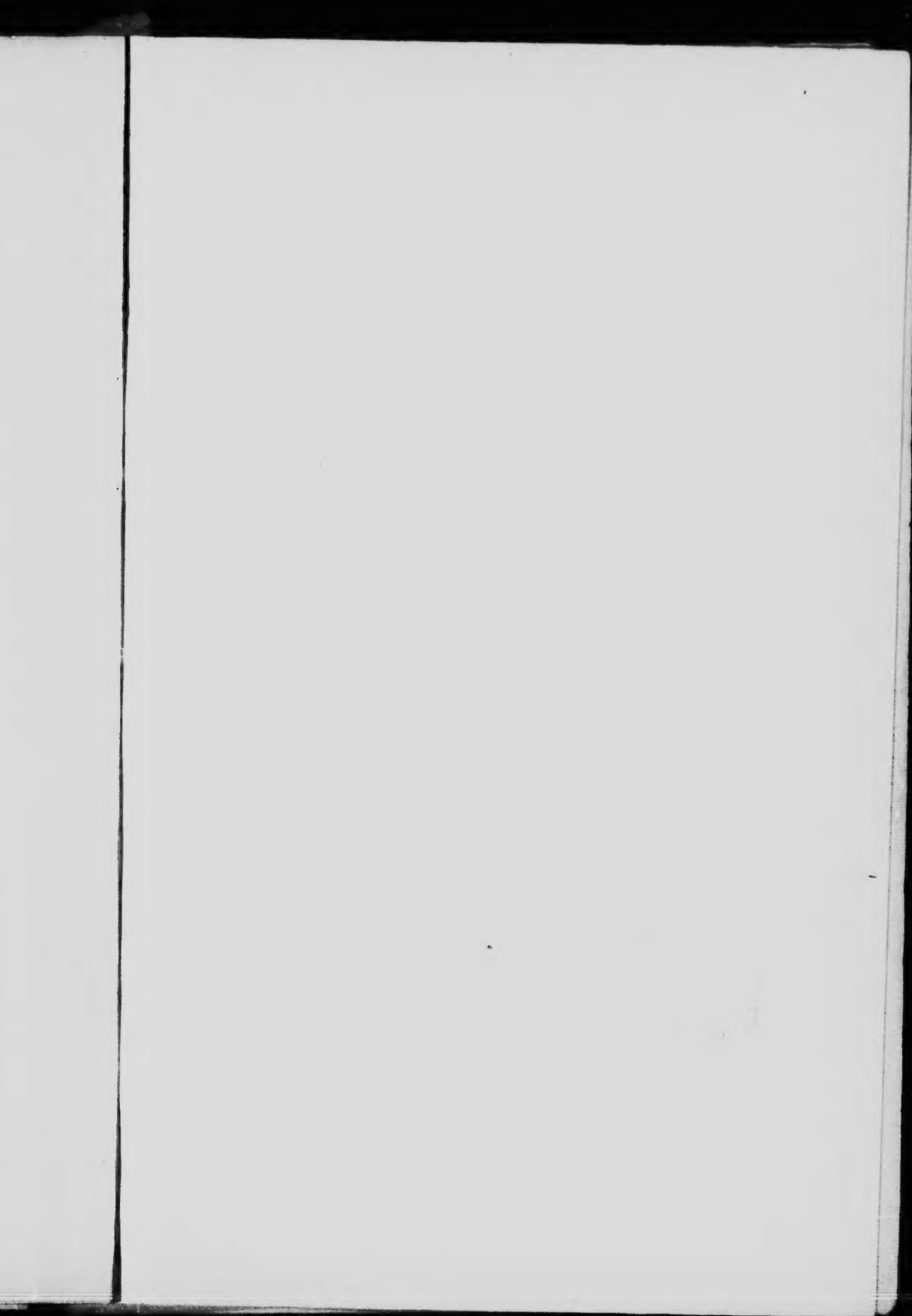






*The road thereupon proceeded to drug his soul into a
peace such as it had not known for months*

PROFESSOR LATIMER'S PROGRESS

A Novel of Contemporaneous Adventure

**BY
SIMEON STRUNSKY**

**WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
J. ORMSBEE**

**McCLELLAND, GOODCHILD & STEWART
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PROFESSOR LATIMER'S PROGRESS

CHAPTER I

SICK LEAVE

"You get there at 9.23," said Mrs. Latimer.

"Do I, my dear?" he said.

"I looked it up when I bought your ticket, and I have written Harriet to have a cold supper ready for you. I don't trust the food in the diner overmuch." She ran an expert eye over the little heap of luggage at his feet. "I think you have everything,—bag, umbrella, raincoat, golf-clubs,—and here are some magazines I have picked out; the right kind." She smiled. Without looking he knew they were the all-fiction magazines and not disturbing. "And I think I will say good-bye."

"There's still ten minutes," said Latimer.

"I'd rather not wait," she said; and lifted up her face to be kissed.

He had to bend his lips to the level of his shoulders.

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"My dear," he said, "I want to beg your pardon."

"For what?"

"I have been hard to live with."

"Nonsense," she said. "Take care of yourself. Go to bed early. Don't overeat. Walk every day, but not in the sun. Don't read except what I send you. And no excitement. Good-bye."

She took her kiss and walked down the platform without haste and without bravado. But there was about the parting of this elderly pair an unmistakable aroma of sentiment which drew an amused smile from the pretty young woman in a green sporting coat who was saying her modern, indifferent, clipped farewell to a young man in a paddock coat and gray spats.

All the way down the platform Latimer watched his wife's resolute, tiny figure. Then he beckoned to a porter and climbed, breathing heavily, up the steps of the car. His great, unathletic bulk filled the passageway.

Latimer told the truth. He had been hard to live with ever since the first of August, 1914, although that was not the reason of his banishment to Sister Harriet's place up-state. He was being sent away for his own good, as far as possible from the War,

which from the first day had laid hold of his soul's peace and put it to the rack. Every campaign in the three continents and on and under the seas had been fought simultaneously somewhere in Latimer. His heart was seldom out of the trenches. The war had mobilized him more completely than if it had placed a rifle in his hands and sent him to the firing line. It had not altered his habits; he was as fond as ever of rich foods, of wine on occasion, of his afternoon nap, of friendship, of loud and colored talk, of the buoyant, intellectual, epicurean, big-city existence in which his robust being was at ease after thirty years on a college campus. But the war had shaken the foundations of his daily practice. It would sweep upon him and empty all life of its meaning. The war would descend upon him on bright summer mornings, as he was shaving or lacing his shoes.

"Why am I doing this?" he would say. "Out there men are flat in the mud with unseeing eyes to the sky." He woke nights, lest Russia conclude a separate peace. He hurt his digestion by thinking suddenly of Bethmann-Hollweg.

"You are particularly fond of veal," Mrs. Latimer would complain, "and you haven't touched it." Veal, she was saying; and if casualties on the

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Aisne continued to mount up, how long could poor France stand it?

He lost his temper frequently. To be sure, after you had called a man a scoundrel at your own table, you could always telephone to him at midnight in an agony of repentance and beg his pardon. Still, it was a strain on friendship and it was very bad for the blood-pressure. He could not deny it: as one dear old lady told him to his face, his views on the war did not show good taste. That was after she had suggested a way of combating the submarines and Latimer had shouted "Nonsense!"

Decidedly, if Mrs. Latimer had not been living with him for thirty-five years, she would have found it hard to live with him now. His going away was by doctor's orders. He was not sorry to go. He longed for the peace of mind that had been his before Von Kluck outflanked it. He was fond of Sister Harriet's cooking. He took his golf-clubs along as a matter of etiquette; what he would do would be to walk—"I am still good for fifteen miles a day, my friend."

"Three miles a day will do nicely the first week," said Dr. Gross. "And only one newspaper a day, the smaller the headlines the better. No letters; as little conversation as you can live on; work in

the garden; take your good old Walter Scott along and go to sleep over him whenever you feel like it."

"There's more life and wit in a page of Scott," shouted Latimer, "than in a trunkful of your Wellses and Bennetts."

"All right," said Dr. Gross. "I said anything that will keep you quiet. If you can go to sleep on Bennett, I have no objections."

"I have never read him and never will," sputtered Latimer.

"But why shout?" said the doctor. "And remember, if you behave yourself, you can come back in a month. If not, it's for the duration of the war!"

He began by obeying orders. He dozed while the train ran across the desolation of the Hackensack meadows and climbed the foothills of commuterland. He woke in fifteen minutes greatly refreshed. Mrs. Latimer's resolution must have given way when she laid in her stock of light literature for his journey. Tucked away among the all-fiction magazines he found a copy of the *Nation*. Manfully he passed by the editorials, the foreign correspondence, the letters to the editor and the chronicle of the week, to give himself to a lengthy

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review of a New Syllabary of Early Babylonian, a subject of which he knew nothing whatever, but which he could always follow with interest. It was one of those conscientious bits of work in which the reviewer points out that the author has erred in rendering an obscure text, "I, the King, have built six temples for my glory," and that the proper translation would rather be, "I, the King, have bestowed six oxen on my daughters (nieces?)." He read the article through, and was on the whole inclined to believe that oxen and daughters was the sounder version. From Babylonia he drifted on to a letter on the London dramatic season by the wise and gentle William Archer. In the middle of the second page a name caught his eye and he read quickly for half a minute.

"That is a lie!" he called out; so loudly that the lady in a black velvet hat with a green veil in the next chair turned to look at him. He did not notice her. He was staring for the second time at the lines that had roused him to such swift condemnation.

"There are some things for which war destroys one's palate," Mr. Archer wrote, "and Mr. Shaw's persiflage is one of them. His whole habit of mind is out of place in such a crisis, and I cannot but

think that an uneasy consciousness of this fact leads him to exaggerate his foibles and to assume an aloofness, not to say a callousness, which he does not really feel. He gives one the impression of caring for nothing so long as he can crack his joke. I am sure that in this he does his real nature injustice."

"That is a lie," said Latimer, and threw the paper from him. There was hot wrath in his eyes and his face was a dull red in its framework of close-clipped whiskers. "Injustice to Bernard Shaw's real nature! This is his real nature!"

The lady in the black velvet hat made up her mind about him and returned to her magazine.

He had read much of the real nature of the author of *Man and Superman*. He had heard anecdotes of the man's kindness, of the secret charities that lay behind the mask of japing irreverence. He had wished them to be true, but this war had made it impossible. Yes, there are people who do not wear their hearts upon their sleeves. Yes, there are shy people who will scold to conceal the shame of tenderness. But there must be a limit. "I refuse to believe," said Latimer to himself, "that there is a real nature which can be permanently concealed. Smith robs

his employer and shoots his wife in a drunken rage. Very well, perhaps I do not know his real nature. But when Smith reveals a talent for burning down orphan asylums, when he takes pleasure in administering poison to canary birds, when he likes to jostle cripples from the sidewalk into the traffic,"—Latimer cudgeled his brains for specimens of Smith's iniquity,—“please, please, don't ask me to fix my mind on the man's real nature. Or at least tell me when that real nature *will* exhibit itself. If the calvary of a world, if the blood of millions, if the dead of the Lusitania and the babies slain by the Zeppelin, if the spectacle of a world in dissolution and rebirth is not enough to bring out the real nature in Bernard Shaw, then tell me what will. Nothing! Nothing!”

“I beg your pardon,” said the lady in the green veil. “Were you addressing me?”

Latimer turned utterly red.

“I beg yours, madam; I was only talking to myself,” he said.

“Oh,” said the lady, and went back to her magazine.

“I am violating orders,” thought Latimer. “I must be calm.” And he went to look for calm in the smoking compartment. It was dinner-time and

he had the place to himself. He lit a cigarette and watched the shadows falling on the hillside.

"The trouble with me," thought Latimer, "is that I have no measuring-stick for life. I have no formula. I am just a sentimental old fool. I go about saying, 'What does this mean, what does that mean, what does this whole idiotic, booming confusion of a world mean?' Because I have no standards and no formulas to explain away things as they happen, they shatter me and keep me awake nights. Why should I always be agonizing over Russia and over General Nivelle and the submarines and American democracy after the war? The trouble is, I am a clumsy amateur of life."

He thought of the others, the professionals he called them, the men of his own station in the clubs, the colleges, on the newspapers—thinkers, writers, politicians, reformers, stand-patters, socialists, æsthetes, revolutionists, and Satanists,—the men who had worked out their formula,—they called it creed,—who had perfected themselves in the use of their professional yardstick, who could measure everything and understand everything.

"Lucky dogs," thought Latimer, "nothing can shake 'em, nothing can puzzle 'em, not even a world war. It fits into their formula, and if the war has

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to be clipped a bit before it fits, or the formula has to be stretched a bit, what's the odds? But most of the time the facts are made to fit the formula. For every Socialist whom the war has converted to a new explanation, there are five who have converted the war to the Socialist explanation. The Pacifist who wrote books before the war to prove that war had become economically, socially, and psychologically impossible—will he admit now that he was in error? Not at all; the war only proves his contention, though how, I have not for the life of me been able to determine," thought Latimer. "The man who argued that only a great standing army could have kept the United States out of war—does Europe of August 1, 1914, armed to the chin, worry him? Not at all. A little twist to the facts here and a little turn to logic there, and the formula is as good as ever. Oh, the comfort of a good, double-jointed, collapsible, extension formula! Oh, the saving on a man's heart and nerves!"

Only one cigarette at a time, Dr. Gross had said; but the question was, when did the new régime begin. Could the train journey be properly regarded as part of one's vacation? Obviously not. Old Gross must have referred to the moment one stepped out of the train at Williamsport. But this much he

would do without loss of time—he simply would not give another moment's thought to the war. And, by heavens, he would *not* have another cigarette!

He picked up a picture magazine. It was sedative. Film stars; Ty Cobb in action; multimillionairesses hoeing potatoes; drawing-room in the new 200-foot motor-yacht Aloha; Billy Sunday in action, and underneath the picture, in large type in a box, "Billy Sunday's Own Formula: How I Keep Myself Fit."

He did not study the formula. He lit a cigarette and thought of Billy Sunday and the vast roaring assemblies that went on in New York in the early months after we had entered the war. Surely the war should have made its mark on Billy Sunday and his gospel, if on any one. Here was a man whose concern was entirely with the soul; and what had not happened to the souls of men since the summer of 1914? The war could not help but drive some men, through despair of humanity, to take refuge in God. It should have driven others, through despair of finding a meaning in things, into a denial of God. Some change there must have come, and that change should have been registered in Billy Sunday, given the man's preoccupation with God and Satan.

Latimer smiled to recall the evangelist on the platform, as he had seen him only a few weeks ago. The tricks of the game were exactly what they had been during the last half-dozen years. The painfully spontaneous, piping-hot sermons were the same, except for an occasional interlude of flag-waving—the timely “gag” with which the vaudeville performer seasons his carefully rehearsed “act.” The show was the same. For Billy Sunday the war had not been. Precisely like the chorus-girl processions with drums and flags in the Broadway midnight theatres.

No; whatever might be the effect of the war upon our world of twenty-five years from now, for the present the old formulas held. It was Business as Usual, Salvation as Usual, Militarism as Usual, Pacifism as Usual, Socialism, Suffragism, Æstheticism, Advertising, Athleticism as Usual. Mr. Bernard Shaw as Usual, Mr. H. G. Wells as Usual; even the pictured advertisements of ready-made clothes in the back of the magazine, Distinctively Different, as usual.

The clouds were scurrying in from the west, and rain-drops spattered on the sill of the open window. He took in with parted lips, gratefully, the little puffs of cold wind. The train was laboring

upwards in sweeping loops; the hills were closing in from either side—shadow, mountain, cool, and wet. Everywhere was the glint and murmur and freshness of water. It was the region from which the great city one hundred and twenty miles away gathered in its drink and its cleanliness. The country was a-brim—ponds, streams, dams, bridges, rain, shallow reaches among the boulder beds, springs, rain, wells, wells—

Yes, even though Mr. Wells, as a result of the war, did discover the Kingdom of God. What then? Wells the materialist, Wells the sexualist, the irreconcilable critic of stale and shopworn faiths, —was not the case of Wells the case of Ignatius Loyola, of Francis of Assisi, of Saul of Tarsus? Also, no, Latimer felt. In this reaction of Mr. Wells to the war and to God, he saw only a busy professional spirit at work. It was the man's business to respond to the great question of the moment, to make of himself a sensitized plate, as the hack phrase went. Precisely as the modern, acutely alive Wells had responded to the new technical education, to the new democracy, to the new woman, to the new morality, so now, "Hello, here is something very tremendous going on: it is a world war, it is the biggest thing yet, and I, Wells, gifted

cosmic reporter, who have recorded and analyzed all kinds of social phenomena, am going to tackle this huge proposition!" And the result was the Kingdom of God. Latimer did not mean to question the sincerity of the Wellsian report; but somehow it was not quite Paul, Francis, Ignatius. It was not the case of a great event seizing on Mr. Wells and wringing his entrails.

"No, I take it all back," said Latimer. "I apologize. What an eager, searching spirit it is, this man Wells! Suppose he does turn out answers to the world-riddle which next week go into the junk heap? They are working hypotheses. Some day he will find the right answer. While I—"

"The trouble with me is that at the age of sixty-two I am still drifting," said Latimer. "Too sentimental, too sincere; an ancient arteriosclerotic baby." For the space of five minutes he was very unhappy. Then a warm current of satisfaction invaded him. He was immensely pleased with himself for being sentimental and vibrating and utterly open-minded in a world full of shrewd, practical people.

And that in turn reminded him how hungry he was. He did not share his wife's distrust of railway food, and since it was inevitable that he should

be violating her long list of instructions, there was no harm in beginning now. Only he must not do it all at once. He picked out a table all to himself, so that no one would speak to him about the war.

A chill rain was falling when he left the train at Williamsport. He had thought that Harriet might be at the station, and had worked himself up into a fine emotional glow. She was not there. The disappoint^{ment}, the rain, the dim lights and the moldy smell of the archaic railway shed, made him feel suddenly cold and tired.

An elderly dignitary in best Sunday clothes of black, with a black bow under a turn-down collar over a starched shirt, climbed out of the driver's seat of a buggy and shuffled across the platform. It was old Runkle, who with Mrs. Runkle comprised his sister Harriet's domestic establishment.

At the sight of the man Latimer felt the recent evil years fall from him. Here was something of the good old solid world he once had known. Old Runkle was still wearing his heavy black worsted and starched shirt from May to October. With the first fall of snow he would put on a corduroy vest and a straw hat and so go about his labors.

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Why, no one had ever been able to discover. But it was good to find it so.

"Hello, Nicholas!" And Latimer's hand shot out and seized Runkle's limp fingers. "How's my sister?"

"Hrumph," said Runkle and turned away. He piled the luggage under the driver's seat and climbed in.

"And Selma?" asked Latimer as he buttoned the flaps of the wagon against the rain.

Now Selma was Mrs. Runkle.

"Hrumph," said Runkle, and clicked to the horse.

Latimer laughed. He should have remembered that Runkle's attitude to newcomers in Williamsport was one of consistent suspicion. Runkle spoke to no one the first twenty-four hours after a meeting. Not even to Harriet when she came back from a visit to town, bringing with her presumably some of its taint. Strangers had to undergo a quarantine of three days before Runkle answered questions. It was good to find things as they had been, thought Latimer. He fell into a doze.

Harriet was not at home. The Red Cross local, Selma told him, was being reorganized at a special meeting in the Methodist church and she would

probably be late. Latimer was not to sit up for her. His supper was waiting for him and his room was ready. Selma showed an inclination for light conversation. But he had eaten, and he was tired and a trifle homesick.

"You are looking younger than ever, Selma," he said; "I think I will go to bed."

CHAPTER II

THE GUINEA-PIG

THE sun was on the grass and in his eyes when he came out on the porch next morning—the first one to stir in the house. He opened his mouth to the quickening breeze from the hills. He made no haste to renew acquaintance with his surroundings. Rather, like an elderly epicure, he let the savor of the familiar scene swim in upon him. Lazily, but with a friendly smile, he identified it bit by bit—the trees in their places, the outbuildings quite where they ought to be, and all the minute geography of the garden. He went down to the lawn to let his eye run over the old house; and finding it quite itself from cellar-window to chimney, nodded his greeting to it.

He let himself out of the gate and strolled down Main Street. The village was asleep. The ancient chairs on the porch of the General Store were waiting for their daily load of sages and loafers. Behind the closed doors of the post-office lay the promise of a day's emotion for an entire com-

munity. To Latimer there came across the years a whiff of the cool and awe which summer mornings used to bring to a lonely little boy in a small town. He would get up with the sun, slip on his clothes, and wander through such a street of drowsy shop-windows and barred doors, a street of dreams and poetry. Then, of course, he had no words to clothe the peace and wonder that encompassed him. And now that he had the words, he would often try to bring back the miracle of those fresh mornings; but it would not come except at unbidden moments and as a dissolving mist that vanished when he snatched at it.

He turned off from Main Street and into an unpaved road where the houses, close set at first, thinned out into open fields. He peered over fences into small garden-beds whose primitive colors were still wet with the dew. He stopped to listen to sleepy, metallic noises from back kitchens, where the altar fires of the common life were being lighted for the day. He smiled over the scattered childhood casualties of yesterday—a rag doll abandoned in the swinging chair in the garden because of an enforced retreat to bed; a pair of horse-reins with bells on the porch-steps; a bonnet with ribbons dangling from the door-handle.

A furious scandal-mongering was under way in the tree-tops, where the business of the day had been going on for some hours.

And then, above the chatter of the birds at their front doors, Latimer heard a squeal of pain. It came from close to the ground, apparently a few steps away, under a barbed-wire fence which enclosed a vacant lot. The sound was repeated, and Latimer, stooping close to the ground, discerned commotion in the grass under the fence. He ran to the spot, plumped down on his knees, and parting the grass with his hands, nearly let his fingers fall on a little, twitching mass of reddish-brown hair under the bottom strand of the wire. Brown eyes looked up at him in pain and fear.

"Poor little devil!" said Latimer. "Out to see the world, and seeing it with a vengeance."

The guinea-pig, trying to slip under the wire, had caught its pelt in the prongs and succumbed to panic. It insisted on twitching forward, and so drove the barbs in deep, and as it struggled it squealed. Latimer laid a firm hand on the palpitating little body, and with the other snapped the wire upward. The little beast gave one loud cry of pain and relief, and with a squirm was out of Latimer's grasp and scurrying back to a hutch in the neigh-

boring garden, which it never should have left.

Latimer remained on his knees, and watched the adventurer out of sight. He saw blood on the finger of his left hand and the wire was brown with rust. For a minute or two he sucked his finger before twisting his handkerchief around it, his mind nevertheless engrossed with the departed stranger. And while he was still cording the handkerchief around his finger, with his knees in the grass, he found himself thinking aloud.

"O guinea-pig under the barbed-wire," said Latimer, "dumb brother now licking your lacerated fur, deeply humiliated, in the sympathetic family circle, take no shame for your misadventure. If you must whine, whine; but those are honorable scars, won against the hereditary enemy. More splendid reputations than yours have been ripped and torn by barbed-wire—Von Moltke and Viscount French of Ypres, Ian Hamilton and Von Kluck and Nicholas Nicholaievitch. Some have been more fortunate than others, but none has escaped from the barbed-wire with a whole skin. Lick your fur without undue shame, dumb brother of the back-garden. Joffre, Friedrich Wilhelm, Kuropatkin, and Sir Douglas Haig are licking theirs.

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"Only you are greater than any of these. Who are you, you ask? I will tell you, silent brother of the back-garden and the research laboratory. You are the ultrascientific guardian of life, and the barbed-wire is our perfected formula of death, and the encounter between you two is the tragedy of man in this our twentieth century."

(Latimer observed a stirring in the grass at the other end of the vacant lot. A blunt nose was thrust out from under cover and a pair of brown eyes peered across the zone of safety. The guinea-pig was fast recovering from its wounds and succumbing to curiosity.)

"Not in vain, inarticulate brother," went on Latimer, "has nature bestowed on you and your mate a bounteous fertility. You and yours are the cannon-fodder for the General Staffs of bacteriology. Your regiments are perpetually mobilized for the defense of our race. Into your veins we inject all the ills and poisons of our higher civilization—anthrax and diphtheria, cancer, smallpox and tuberculosis, leprosy, meningitis, pneumonia, typhus and typhoid, and all the infections of the eye and ear, of nose and throat, of bone and muscle and cartilage and nerve and gland, which humanity has accumulated in its march upward. All these bitter

questions we put to you with the hypodermic needle and the scalpel, and you give answer. You react positively or you react negatively, but always to the full measure of your ability, and most often at the cost of your life. So it is your tiny paw which falls cool on the fevered heads of little children, and mothers counting the red lines on the clinical thermometer give thanks to you, O guinea-pig, who, strictly speaking, art neither pig nor from Guinea, but only six inches of wild rabbit, the friend of man, the martyr and scapegoat of humanity, and the close associate of little boys and girls.

"Yes, you do your best, silent brother. And when with your aid we have saved a million little children from diphtheria and meningitis, and they have grown into strapping, clear-eyed young men, the barbed-wire takes them."

(The guinea-pig had launched himself into a sudden dash across the field, with the mad intention of trying a second bout with the wire, but came to a stand-still at the sight of Latimer, a few yards away.)

"Take no shame in your wounds, little snub-nosed Field-Marshal," continued Latimer. "He is no mean opponent, this barbed-wire. He is a snake

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in the grass and a mighty rampart. By driving stakes into the ground and stringing thin threads of steel, we have created ten thousand miles of fortress and made a jest of Jericho and Troy and Camelot, of Vicksburg, Plevna, Metz, and Verdun. It is well for Cæsar and Napoleon that they are dead before the age of barbed-wire. Their fame would now be hanging in shreds on its teeth. It is the mightiest instrument of death we have invented, the most portable, and the most economical, showing the heaviest returns for every dollar invested."

(With the same unreasoning impetus that had brought him forward, the guinea-pig whirled about and dashed off to his house across the field.)

"You do right to be wary of your enemy, silent brother," said Latimer. "Do not give in to him, but do not despise him. There are difficult times before you. For after this barbed-wire age there may come the age of barbed-wireless. A machinist may press a button and a hundred thousand men will be impaled on a network of flesh-eating vibrations. To-day it is a tie between you two. But you must look to the future, to the casualties of the barbed-wireless age, and the greater supply of life for the growing demand. Give heed to prepared-

ness. Multiply your kind for the test-tube and the microscope, O crown of brute creation, mightier than Behemoth, more conquering than the lion of Judah, guinea-pig, brother, fulcrum of our scientific universe!"

(Latimer paused, held his nose to the wind, and quickly got to his feet. From the kitchen giving on the back-yard to which the guinea-pig had retired came the delightful fragrance of frying bacon.)

"I feel much better already," said Latimer as he made his way back through Main Street, which was just starting into life. "How lovely the old place is! I must come back more often."

And if some reader should object that the preceding discourse, because of its measured cadences, should properly have been set down as free verse instead of prose, I would point out that the guinea-pig, listening without the text before him, would not have known the difference.

Harriet, the night before, had triumphantly reorganized the Williamsport Red Cross by having herself elected president and treasurer, and she was now hurrying to catch the 8.59 for Bloomington, to make extensive purchases of cotton and gauze.

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Hence she considered it a very happy suggestion of her brother's that he load a knapsack and start out for a few days in the hills.

Latimer teased his strong-minded, capable, crisp-tongued sister.

"But you are under instruction from Lucy"—Lucy was Mrs. Latimer—"to take particular care of me."

"I am," said Harriet; and ran for her train.

At the gate Latimer was accosted by Nicholas Runkle, whose suspicions of him had softened sufficiently overnight to permit conversation.

"When d'ye think now this war of theirs will be over, Professor Latimer?" said Nicholas.

"You know as much about it as I do, Nicholas. A year perhaps."

Nicholas looked around to see if he was overheard.

"I don't believe there's goin' to be any fighting," he said. "I don't believe we are goin' into the war."

"But we are in it. Half a million men are drilling."

"So they say," said Nicholas, with an ironic upward twist of the lips.

(Ah, thought Latimer, the old fellow is suspi-

cious of the war. He is determined not to be imposed upon.)

"One thing I can tell you," said Latimer; "America won't stop till every German helmet has been cleared out of Belgium."

"How do I know the Germans are in Belgium? I have to take their word for it," said Nicholas.

Latimer grew angry, slammed the gate behind him, laughed out loud, and returned.

"Nicholas,—” he said.

Nicholas Runkle believed that Doctor Cook discovered the North Pole and that Admiral Peary was an impostor. He believed that Congress was forced to declare war by the secret machinations of the Catholic Church. He believed that Kitchener did not perish off the Orkney Islands, but is alive today, a prisoner in the Tower for having sold military secrets to Germany for the sum of \$100,000,000 and the promise of the British crown under German suzerainty. But he had his doubts as to whether President Wilson really wrote his messages on a typewriter, and he was convinced that the city of New York had nothing like the population credited to it in the Census reports. In no case would Nicholas take "their" word for it, "they" being various gigantic conspiracies for disseminating false

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information—the Catholic Church, which Nicholas thought of as meeting at midnight in subterranean places for the framing of mischief; the newspapers, which received their orders every morning in a sealed envelope from the office of J. P. Morgan and Company; the colleges; and the book-publishers, who were the worst conspiracy of all.

As against the books published by such publishers associated for the deception of the people, Nicholas had in his attic room a very impressive library that really told the truth. They were books in paper covers, put out at the author's expense, in a job printing office that evidently dispensed with proof-readers. The authors had plainly frustrated the evil conspiracy of the public schools for the dissemination of the elementary rules of grammar. They usually began with the Seven Circles of Existence and the Universal Law of Vegetarianism as developed by the sages of India; and from these premises went on to prove that Cook had discovered the North Pole, that Mr. Roosevelt had Japanese blood in his veins, that the Catholic Church was responsible for the failure of the wheat crop, and so forth.

"Nicholas," said Latimer, "do you believe the earth is which—round or flat?"

Nicholas twisted his lips to a point and would not answer. Flat, of course. And if people believed otherwise it was because the school-book-publishers had to make a living.

Harriet had pointed out that for the purposes of mountaineering Latimer's wardrobe was overstocked in starched collars and red cravats, and deficient in rough foot-gear. She directed him to the General Store.

"Dekker's Emporium," Latimer read on the sign. "Except for the word Emporium, which shows the urban influence, there is about the primitive aspect of this store sufficient evidence that the old spirit is maintaining itself. Dekker is an ancient name in this region. It harks back to the Palatinate and the year 1700, when the sturdy German farmers first made their way into the valley of the Delaware. That there should still be a Dekker keeping store argues the persistence of the past."

From behind a wall of packing-cases piled up to the ceiling at the back of the store, an elderly, quick-eyed person with a closely cropped red beard came forth at the sound of the door-bell. His alert manner in the presence of a customer was not of the rural shopkeeper type. Latimer tried to identify in

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his features the traits of the eighteenth-century Palatines, and was puzzled. He believed he had stumbled right at the start upon a remarkable example of eccentric racial development.

"Mr. Dekker?" said Latimer.

"This used to be Dekker's, yes, sir," said the proprietor. "My name is Rosenbaum."

"You are new here?"

"Three years this June," said Rosenbaum.

"I should like a pair of shoes."

"Certainly. Our new line is just in. Something about—?"

"The price hardly matters," said Latimer. "I want a pair of comfortable shoes."

Before Latimer had composed himself to his ethnological discovery, Rosenbaum was holding up a shoe by the latchet for his approval. It was in patent leather, and Latimer thought it extremely attractive; but he recalled what Harriet had said about comfort as the first requisite.

"No," he said. "Show me something that will stand hard wear."

Rosenbaum flashed behind the counter and returned.

"Our best-seller," he said. "The cloth top comes in three shades, but this is the most popular."

"You don't quite follow me," said Latimer. "I want a plain, all-leather shoe, broad toe, heavy soles; the kind all your people here buy."

Rosenbaum looked up in dismay.

"This is what they all buy. I haven't had a call for any other kind for a month."

"Let me understand you," said Latimer. "You assert that the demand for shoes in this community is confined to patent leathers and cloth tops?"

"Well, now and then, some of the old fellows from up the mountain will ask for the other kind."

"That is the kind I want," said Latimer. "See if you can find a pair."

And something of the kind was found among the discards in the storage room behind the packing-cases.

"Anything in the line of socks?" said Rosenbaum.

"By all means."

"Silk? Half-silk? Lisle? I can show a first-class assortment."

"No," said Latimer, "cotton. Double-soled if that is possible, or wool if they are not too heavy."

Rosenbaum made a second trip to the back room and after a search brought back two pairs of heavy, blue cotton socks. Latimer proceeded to change his

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foot-gear. The act of stooping put him into a perspiration and he bethought himself of flannel shirts.

"We have them in madras, pongee, silk," said Rosenbaum. "Soft cuffs or laundered."

Latimer lost patience.

"A couple of gray flannel shirts of the kind that the people around here wear about their ordinary occupations."

"But they don't," said Rosenbaum. "They never wear rough flannels. The summer visitors do. Only this is early in the year."

Latimer made shift with a plain gray sweater, which Rosenbaum hunted up in the limbo behind the partition, after his customer had rejected a white sweater, in half silk, with scarlet facings round the collar. Rosenbaum would charge only a nominal price for his derelict stock, and this led to a friendly argument which passed by natural gradations into a discussion of Biblical literature, into which it is not my purpose to enter. It seemed that Rosenbaum believed that the Old Testament was written by Moses, punctuation marks and all; whereat Latimer sighed, shook hands, and set forth on his journey. It was now well on toward nine o'clock, and the village was alive.

CHAPTER III

THE FILM QUEEN

HE was free, alone, and on the open road. Looking forward at breakfast to the first morning of his holiday in the open, he had thought of any number of problems to which he might now devote unlimited periods of consecutive speculation. Only, as he walked, he found that nature is not conducive to sustained thought. The stage-setting is too big, the lights are too strong, there are all sorts of distracting sounds and odors and colors. After several brave attempts to force his mind into action upon a set topic, he surrendered and let the road do with him as it pleased. The road thereupon proceeded to drug his soul into a peace such as it had not known for months.

He had set out at a good pace, unwisely. Within an hour he grew painfully aware of his legs. The road rose steadily in a succession of long, teasing loops, to the crest of the divide he had set out to cross. Some distance from the top he pulled up—not from fatigue, oh, no; but for the view, as we

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all do. The hills were lifting up in front of him and on either side, and the next turn in the road would throw a green barrier behind him. The hills were playing riot across country, chasing, outflanking, tumbling into each other. Or in the background a green promontory would thrust forward into the sunlight, like an enormous dog at rest with his head on his paws. The woods ran up to the very ridge like the heavy nap of a carpet. Latimer felt very little and tired. He had breakfasted too heartily for a first day's journey. It was careless in Harriet.

He sighed, and went on, sparing himself. He reached the summit with a fair reserve of breath, but the steep descent to Elk Creek was a sore trial for his ankles. In his preliminary studies on the map he had fixed upon Westville as the first halting-place; that was four miles away. The road crossed Elk Creek on an ugly red iron bridge and swung south, parallel with the stream. He trudged along with much less vim on the level highway than he had put into climbing the hills. As an abstract proposition, he fell to wondering how long a mile would be in these parts.

He was tiring rapidly. The early morning breeze had died away, and the sun beat down on him.

After all, why be a slave to schedules? Just off from the road a great willow stood deep in the grass. He would lie down for a few minutes and read. Before doing that, it would be good to cut across the field and bathe one's face and hands in the creek; but even that short *détour* was too much of a task. He unlimbered his knapsack, lowered himself painfully to the ground, pulled out *Quentin Durward* from the bag, and, turning to the fourteenth chapter, fell asleep.

He had scarcely closed his eyes when he was awake again. The earth was rocking under him in the most disturbing fashion. On further consideration, it was not the earth at all, but himself. A young woman in an automobile duster was bending over him and shaking him vigorously by the shoulder. He sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"Are you ill?" said the girl.

"Not at all," said Latimer, half asleep; "can I do anything for you?"

"You've been carrying on like anything—moaning and tossing about."

"But that can scarcely be," said Latimer. "I have just lain down to rest after a fatiguing journey and was preparing to take a short nap."

"You have another guess coming," said the

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young woman. "You were fast asleep when we came by in the machine an hour ago, and you were still going strong when I spied you on our way back. My arm's tired."

In fact Latimer saw the sun high over his head. His bones ached. His palate was dry.

"Do you want anything?" said the girl.

"I should greatly appreciate a drink of cold water." He started to rise.

"Don't stir," she said. "Archibald, bring a cup of water."

She turned to two men who stood close by, looking down upon Latimer with only the faintest curiosity. The elder of the two was a heavy-jowled figure in a dust-coat which was sufficiently open at the throat to show a fat diamond in a crimson scarf beneath the blue of a desperately shaven chin. Archibald was a very tall and sad-eyed young man, with a two days' beard and only on the most indifferent terms of friendship with his clothes. He had no motor-coat and his derby was tilted back at an angle so as to bring a tall forehead into the general scheme with a prominent Adam's apple. He strolled meditatively to the car, searched for the drinking-cup without haste, and in due course made his thoughtful way to the edge of the

creek and back again to the little group under the tree.

"Thank you," said Latimer; and Archibald nodded. Even without the sleepy friendliness in his eyes Latimer was prepared to like him much better than the heavy man with the blue-black jaw.

The latter pulled out his watch and growled.

"It's late, Gladys. Let's move on."

Gladys did not bother to answer.

"Quite sure you're right?" she said to Latimer.

"Beyond question," he said.

But the effort with which he got to his feet did not please her.

"Which way are you going?"

"I am bound for Westville, where I purpose to take lunch," said Latimer.

"We're going the other way," said the man in the duster. Archibald had picked up *Quentin Durward*, and was reading with evident interest.

"But we could take him back, Baby," said Gladys. "It's only a minute in the machine, and I don't like the idea of letting him start off by himself."

"I assure you, madam, there is no occasion for anxiety," said Latimer. "The fact is I very rarely dream."

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"The old man's all right," said Baby. "Come on."

"Go ahead, if you like," said Gladys, eliminating him from her consciousness.

"I will," said Baby; and, stalking off to the car, he plunked down into the driver's seat with superfluous energy.

"Madam," said Latimer, "I really stand in no need of assistance, and I should greatly regret to make myself a source of contention between husband and wife. Permit me to thank you for your kindness and to go my way."

Gladys laughed aloud, not unpleasantly, Latimer thought. Archibald looked up from the pages of *Quentin Durward*, and a grin spread over that Hamlet countenance which Latimer was getting to like more and more.

"No offense," said Gladys.

"I suspect none," said Latimer.

"Only I hate to let you go off by yourself," she said.

Archibald closed the book and handed it back to Latimer with a nod of thanks.

"Suppose I walk back with the gentleman?" he said. "It's all the same to me if I wait in Westville or at the hotel."

"Good for you, Archibald," she said; and to Latimer, "You don't mind having him trot along? Archie is a nice child, and it would make me feel better."

"Nothing would please me more."

"Fine!" said Gladys. "See you again."

She tripped away to the car, where Baby was manipulating enough levers to start half a dozen automobiles, and took her place beside him. As the car shot away she turned and blew a kiss to Latimer.

Latimer silently acknowledged the thoughtfulness of his long-legged companion in accommodating himself to his own cautious pace.

"A woman of good heart," said Latimer. "Something in her, no doubt, of that modern touch which is apt to merge into frivolity, but essentially a womanly woman."

"Recognize her?" said the sad-eyed one.

"How? From her picture, you mean? In the public press?"

"Everywhere," said Archibald. "Miss Gladys Winthrop, Intercontinental Film Corporation."

"The lady is an actress for the—"

"Yes. She is the Intercontinental star. They

know her all over the world. In the Fiji Islands people pass up a cannibal feast when they put on a Winthrop film."

"Miss Winthrop," said Latimer. "So the gentleman with the red cravat is not her husband?"

"Baby is chief stage-director for the Intercontinental. We are screening Mexican war-scenes a couple of miles down the river, and Miss Winthrop comes down every day from her hotel at Sumnerville."

"And you—"

"I am deputy assistant scenario editor."

"It is an art with which I regret to say I have only the most superficial acquaintance," said Latimer. "The strain on the eyes is trying."

"It is a rotten business," said the other, with a savage intensity Latimer did not think him capable of.

"And yet, my dear Mr. Archibald—"

"My name," said the other, "is Perkins; William Henry Perkins. Archibald is Miss Winthrop's pet name for me."

"Like Baby?"

"Exactly. If you don't mind my saying it, I suspect she is now referring to you as Grandpa."

"I am sure I bear her no ill-will," said Latimer.

"But your opinion of your own profession puzzles me."

"It is not my profession," said Perkins. "I write plays, real plays."

"You have had them produced?"

"One. It's been tried out on the road and we are now licking it into shape for New York. In the meanwhile I do scripts for a living."

"You are to be congratulated," said Latimer. "I have myself on occasion experienced a strong impulse toward the theatre. I went so far as to purchase a textbook on the technique of the drama. And to think that you have actually had a play produced!"

"I've been writing them ever since I can remember," said Perkins. "This one was finished five years ago. It was a melodrama; five acts and fourteen characters; pretty large order, I admit."

"Many of Shakespeare's plays exhibit more than that number of personages," said Latimer.

"That so?" said Perkins. "It's some time since I have looked into Shakespeare. The manuscript was kicked about in the usual way till McClintock got hold of it. That was about a year ago in Chicago. McClintock was crazy about it. 'It's the big idea,' he said. 'It's a wallop.' Only he balked

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at the list of characters. A cast of fourteen means a pretty healthy salary list. So we cut out three of them, a boodle politician, a woman social worker, and a comic policeman. McClintock hated to lose some of the lines, and we gave them to the leading man, who is the candidate of the Reform League for district-attorney. We then went into rehearsal."

"I envy you the experience of seeing for the first time the creatures of your imagination in the flesh," said Latimer.

"Quite so," said Perkins. "Only McClintock's leading woman got an offer from the movies. The only available substitute was a much younger woman. This made it necessary to eliminate the heroine's children. It meant quite a bit of re-writing, but you must be prepared for that. Then we went on the road. McClintock believes in building up his shows before real audiences."

"I am of the same opinion," said Latimer. "The audience is joint-author in every successful play."

"That is what the textbook says." Perkins spoke without the intention of satire, but Latimer blushed. "The first night we put it on somewhere in Indiana. The third act is tensely dramatic, with

a good bit of pathos. Only the crowd laughed. I was in the back of the balcony when that laugh came and you can imagine how I felt."

Latimer stopped short and held out his hand. "I am sorry," he said.

"Oh, that's all right," said the author. "McClintock thought differently. He confessed that at first he felt it was all up with us; but as the crowd went on laughing he brightened, and when the show was over he ran up and slapped me on the back. 'We've got them, Perkins,' he said; 'it don't make any difference whether they laugh or cry so long as they do it strong. Get busy and tickle them some more, old man.' I set to work."

"But the logical structure of the piece was bound to suffer."

"It isn't so hard once you put your mind on it," said Perkins. "We took that court-room scene where the audience got away from us, and lightened it up considerably. Strange to say, in the next town they didn't laugh very much. McClintock thought it over and said a court-room with judges and lawyers and turnkeys was too somber. So we changed it to a private dining-room in a Broadway restaurant. That forced us to cut out the first act."

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Latimer was confused but correspondingly sympathetic.

"At any rate the play has now assumed final shape?"

"Practically," said Perkins. "It comes to Broadway in September; a whimsical farce in three acts and nine characters."

"The labor must have been great," mused Latimer.

"Labor is no word for it. Lots of times I was ready to quit. But McClintock wouldn't hear of it. McClintock was splendid. 'Perkins,' he'd say, 'I'll stake my head on that play. There's a big idea in it. All we have to do is make 'em see it.' And McClintock usually knows what he is talking about."

CHAPTER IV

SHADOW

"WE should be close to Westville," said Latimer.

They stopped to inquire of a big man in rusty city garb with a fishing-rod, who, from a rock in the stream, was casting with a short line into the pools under the opposite bank. He threw his line with a lazy swing as if utterly indifferent to the destination of the fly; almost as if he were of half a mind to withdraw the bait while it was still in the air. When the fly lit and brought no response he withdrew the line and cast again, without interest and without disappointment. Latimer thought of a drowsy man going through his morning exercises in his bedroom.

"What luck?" asked Latimer.

"They never bite much around here," said the fisherman.

He had turned toward Latimer with the same graceful calm he gave to his fishing. If the stranger stopped, he was perfectly willing to give up fishing and talk. If the stranger went on, he would be

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just as glad to go back to his rod. He had a soft drawl that was more of the South than of the New York hills.

"Westville is far off?" said Latimer.

"I shouldn't call it very far," said the fisherman. He pondered on the exact distance and his judicial manner aroused Latimer's fears.

"A couple of miles?"

"No, not that far," said the other. "When you make the turn yonder by that barn you are 'most there."

"Why, then, it is only a matter of a few minutes," said Latimer.

"Well, about that," ruminated the fisherman.

"I am exceedingly obliged," said Latimer, and started off briskly.

They were around the curve of the road in less than ten minutes and found themselves on the edge of the village. They stopped at the first house. It stood back from the road, on a wide stretch of lawn checkered with sunlight through the maple trees. A garden on one side ran down to the brook, which here came within a hundred feet of the road. There was about the house an air of confirmed invalidity. The open veranda, which ran all the length of the broad front, sagged in places, and the trellis-work

underneath showed gaps. A shutter on the upper floor hung slightly out of line. The paint had peeled in places and everywhere was toned to a yellow gray that was not altogether displeasing. About the lawn and garden there was the same suggestion of decay which had not progressed so far but that to the summer boarder it would all be quite romantic.

"I never eat in the middle of the day," said Perkins. "If you don't mind lending me your Scott, I will wait for you outside."

Neither, it appeared, did he take coffee or resort to tobacco, and Latimer decided that a one-sided feast would, indeed, be rather disconcerting. He climbed the porch-steps and knocked.

Back in the house, in the region of the kitchen he surmised, some one was coughing violently. He knocked again and the sound of coughing came nearer. The door was opened by a tall, broad-boned woman in a checked apron, the corner of which she held to her mouth. From her flushed cheeks Latimer inferred that she had just come from the kitchen fire. In her eyes he thought he discerned a resemblance to the misty gaze of the fisherman by the creek, the same languid grace which might be the sign of a temperament or a low vitality.

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She was breathing rapidly, and he conjectured that it was the after effect of the prolonged coughing-spell.

Latimer doffed his hat.

"If it is not inconvenient, madam, I should appreciate a simple luncheon. Eggs and a glass of milk would be quite enough."

"Come in," she said. Her voice reminded him again of the soft drone of the man with the fishing-pole.

She opened a door on her right and showed him into a large dining-room with half a dozen tables. The place spoke of summer boarders and had been little used since the going of the last guest seven months ago. She made to throw open the windows, but it was an effort, and Latimer came to her aid. The inrush of sweet air was a delight. He sank into a chair and sighed happily.

"Will you have tea and muffins with your eggs?" she asked.

"Pray, don't put yourself out for me," said Latimer.

"I am making some for dinner," she said, and withdrew.

In the kitchen he heard that long, harassing cough. It troubled him, but in his pleasant state of

lassitude, he hesitated to embark on disturbing conjectures. Then a rustle at the door made him turn in his chair. A little girl was peering at him from the hallway. As Latimer's eye fell upon her she whisked away, but he had seen a brown head with ringlets and blue eyes alight with curiosity. Her furtive coming and going were in consonance with the dreamy silence that hung over the house.

"I should not have consented to the muffins," thought Latimer. "Whether they are ready or not, it means additional work over the kitchen fire; if not now, then later." He rose to countermand his order and stopped. "The house within is spotless. The child is fresh from soap and water and the comb. The life of this home is functioning normally. Why be officious? She might resent it."

He sat down. He was very fond of corn-muffins.

He ate with relish. The hostess moved about the business of the table efficiently but with the suggestion of a strong will driving a reluctant body. She was plainly not so hearty as her robust frame would lead one to suppose, and her face was hollow beneath the cheek-bones.

"I trust you are doing something for that

troublesome cough," said Latimer. "How long have you had it?"

"It's been hanging on over the winter," she said. "The doctor has given me something for it."

"And is it doing you good?"

She hesitated. "Yes, I think I am better." But in her eyes Latimer saw a fear which made him turn away and look out of the window. In a swing chair on the lawn the little girl was standing on tip-toe, spying on the stranger. He snapped his fingers at her and held up a stick of chocolate which he drew from his pocket. The child scurried round the corner of the kitchen but did not make her expected appearance.

When he had done eating, Latimer went in search of the little one. He found her in the shelter of her mother's apron in what had once been a barn, but was now empty of cattle or wagon-gear and given up to miscellaneous storage. The mother was splitting fagots with a hatchet the handle of which was always coming loose. She declined Latimer's offer to fetch in the wood for her, laughing meanwhile at his ardent courtship of the little one, who managed, all the way back to the house, to keep her mother's skirts as a bulwark against the predatory stranger. Ultimately she succumbed to the lure of

the chocolate. Prolonged and shy negotiations led to a *modus vivendi*, with Latimer established on the kitchen steps leading down to the garden and the child close to him with a hovering eye on mother.

"Pretty soon," said Latimer, "this will be a big girl and helping mother about the house."

The child shook her head with quick decision.

"I don't. I'll go squirrel-shooting with daddy."

In the great heat from the stove the woman's face was crimson. Latimer wondered how it would be with her in midsummer when she was cooking all day for a houseful of boarders.

"Won't you come with me to the city?" Latimer pleaded with the child. "We will live in a big house and go to the circus every Saturday."

"Babe was born in the city," said the woman.

"We've been here only two years."

"Do you like it?"

She stared down at the floor.

"It is better for me," she said.

It probably would be, Latimer thought, if she were spared the rough man's work that had fallen to her. The head of the house must be exceedingly busy elsewhere to make it necessary for the woman

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to split her own kindling-wood and be continually running out of the kitchen on errands that should have been anticipated for her.

"In the city they don't grow cheeks like these," said Latimer, pressing his finger into the firm, brown flesh of the little face beside him.

"It's been best for Babe and myself," said the woman. "But it's hard on my husband. He's city-bred and there's nothing in farming up here in the hills. It's mostly rock and scrub and he isn't very strong."

"There should be some one to help you about the house," said Latimer.

"The girls here are more a nuisance than a help," she said. "I can get on very well."

"The proof is here," said Latimer, tugging gently at the child's curls.

She threatened him with her clenched fist.

"You do think Babe looks well?" said the mother.

Her tone and the recurrent pain in her eyes told him of the dread that was gnawing at the woman's heart.

"I haven't the least doubt of it," he declared with a confidence not at all justified by his knowledge of the subject. "She'll soon be a big woman; as big

as this," addressing himself to the child and pointing to the roof of the kitchen-shed.

The little one, passing easily from shyness to intimacy, made a face at him. The next moment she was crying, "Daddy!" and whirling down the path. It was the man with the fishing-rod. The child rushed at him, buried her face in his trouser-leg, caught his arm, and came dancing back with him, radiant.

Latimer rose. The husband greeted him with that now familiar smile of easy acceptance of things as they are. That the stranger of the road should be sitting there on his own kitchen steps was no more odd than if he had not been there.

"Dinner is 'most ready, Sam," said his wife. "I wish you'd fetch me a bucket of water."

He brought the pail languidly in one hand, with Babe clinging to the other. Latimer settled his account while the husband turned decorously aside.

"It has been a great kindness," said Latimer, holding out his hand.

She stared a little while before extending her own. He offered to shake hands with Babe, who immediately retired behind her father; but, with her father, she escorted the visitor down the path to the street.

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"You have a charming place," said Latimer. "One might be happy here."

For the first time the man's languor fell from him. His eyes were almost wolfish.

"I'd be glad to sell, for half what it cost me," he said. "You don't know of any one who'd want it?"

"Unfortunately, no," said Latimer.

The big, placid face was now twisted with anger at fate and himself.

"It's a hole, a cursed, rocky hole," he cried. "It's no place for a man. In the city I had a large store and there were people you could live with."

He stopped short, nodded farewell, and went back to the house with his grievance. He had been walking close to Latimer and left behind him the odor of cheap whiskey.

From the kitchen came the sound of coughing. Latimer's lips tightened and he found himself walking in the wrong direction, until hailed by Perkins, whom he had utterly forgotten. They walked on in silence.

"She has a great many more puzzles to work out than I have," thought Latimer. "Only she has the answers close at hand. That bright-eyed, cleanly child is one answer. The husband who must have

his warm midday meal is another.—Yes,” he said aloud, “undoubtedly she will get well.”

“Who will?” said Perkins.

Latimer stared at him a moment without understanding.

“Oh, the world will,” he said. And Perkins would not press him for details.

CHAPTER V

CALL OF THE WILD

HALF a mile beyond the village they were overtaken by Miss Winthrop and Baby in the car. Gladys was on her way to the moving-picture camp for an afternoon's work before the camera.

"Now won't you let me give you a lift?" she demanded, registering childish imperiousness.

Latimer was tempted, but fell not.

"Thank you, no," he said. "The impulse to ride is always strong at the beginning of a pedestrian journey. For that very reason it should be resisted."

"But it's nearly four miles," she persisted. "Mr.—"

"Professor Latimer," Perkins told her.

"That means only an hour and a half at the most leisurely pace," said Latimer. "If you will lend me the company of Mr. Perkins for that additional length of time, it will be an easy walk."

"Just as you say, professor," registering queenly complaisance. "Giddap, Baby."

The car shot away.

"How long do you think the war will last, Professor Latimer?" said Perkins.

"It is not a question of men. Financial exhaustion perhaps—"

"Well, now, I wonder," said Perkins. "Money isn't everything."

"No," said Latimer. "You have in mind, I suppose, the classic case of the Ottoman Empire, which has always been bankrupt and always at war?"

Perkins said no; he was thinking of last winter in Chicago when both the children and Mrs. Perkins were ill and there were two trained nurses in the house. When the children took to bed, first the little one and then the boy, Perkins said, the strain was all the harder upon his wife because they were out in the suburbs and without a permanent cook. That is to say, a satisfactory servant can always be obtained for a price, but this price Mrs. Perkins was loath to pay, for obvious reasons. So they had seven kitchen-workers in eight weeks, and managed somehow before the doctor came into the house. Then it didn't matter how things went on downstairs. Mrs. Perkins gave herself entirely to the children, until she broke down completely, and for

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several weeks was ill enough to require a double shift of trained nurses.

Thereupon Perkins did the wise and inevitable thing. He went to the employment office and demanded the best cook obtainable. She was obtained. Her wages would have made poor Mrs. Perkins thoroughly unhappy if she had known, but he took good care not to let her know. Left entirely to her own devices, the new servant was reasonably content, and Perkins was at last free from the horror, under which they had lived for months, of a sudden demand for passports from the kitchen. The tradesmen's bills were enormous, but he gave them no thought. His mind, poor fellow, was with the very sick woman upstairs. The money for everything was forthcoming somehow—just how, he could not tell himself.

"Now, war," said Perkins, "is just like that. The world takes sick and goes to bed and there is plenty of money for everything."

But more than that, said Perkins. He could understand, not only how bankrupt nations can somehow find the means for carrying on war, but how for the time being they actually enjoy it. He could understand crowded movie theatres and expensive automobiles in war-time. Never, he said,

had he experienced so acute a sense of social well-being as during the weeks after his anxiety for his wife had been relieved, but when she was still too ill to dispense with her nurses. Perkins found himself at the head of an establishment. An efficient cook was functioning downstairs. Two handsome young women in uniform were continuously about the house; and as the pressure in the sick-room relaxed, the nurses were occasionally at his own service. Out of pity for the spiritual strain he had been under, these tall young women in uniform petted him. They prepared special desserts for him and went on errands to the tobacco-shop. And when Mrs. Perkins was strong enough to sit up in bed and he might have sent away one of the nurses, he waited until the very last, his wife ultimately intervening. How pleasant it was to have a gracious young woman in white gown and cap alert to the least call with tray, pillow, book, an offer to open the window, or pull down the blind!

Perkins said he felt like the aristocracy in a fashionable London comedy, where you pull a bell-rope and tell Hobson to have the motor ready in ten minutes. For the next two years, Perkins said, he would be paying bills, but while it lasted it was exhilarating. And that was war finance.

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But Latimer had not been listening.

"Mrs. Perkins and the children are quite well now?" he said, stopping short.

"Never better," said Perkins.

"That's splendid," cried Latimer and held out his hand. "When you write you must tell them how glad I am."

"I certainly will."

"And they are coming down, of course, for that first night on Broadway?"

"I hope so," said Perkins. His sallow face went pink. "You know, Dr. Latimer, the reason we could not afford a good cook was—"

"Because it takes a lot of unremunerative labor to turn a five-act melodrama into a three-act farce," cried Latimer.

They laughed like schoolgirls and trudged on in happy silence except that shortly before they reached the "movie" camp, Perkins laid a hasty hand on Latimer's shoulder and pulled him to one side of the road. A heavy automobile thundered by, its sole occupant at the wheel. Latimer caught the mere impression of something big and fat and gross hulking in the driver's seat.

"Someday my friend Busby and I will have to talk this matter out," said Perkins with an un-

wonted flash of color in his cheeks. "Attempted murder is his favorite outdoor amusement."

"And who is Busby?"

"A retired safe-cracker, I should say; or maybe a prizefight impresario. He has a big stud farm around here. I have had the pleasure of meeting him under similar circumstances." But here they turned a corner and forgot Mr. Busby.

In a village of tents along the river-edge and up the slopes of the hill lay the army that was fighting the battles of Mexico for the Intercontinental Film Corporation. Smoke came from the field kitchens. A long row of stables, fresh from the carpenter's hand, sheltered the two hundred horses upon which the Intercontinental's Mexican raiders carried havoc into American territory. Add a fleet of motor-trucks; mountain-heaps of provisions, of forage for the remounts, and of fuel for the motor-drays, all under canvas; cabins of pine and corrugated iron scattered over the hillside, which were studios, developing rooms, store-rooms for the raw and completed film; add a Red Cross tent, with two doctors and several nurses appropriately grouped; and then remember that all this represented only the operations of the left wing of the Mexican

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army. If you will recall that the Mexican right wing was at the same time operating in an open-air studio in Pennsylvania, and that Obregon's main forces were conducting a pitched battle with the Villistas around Los Angeles, you will realize the scale upon which the Intercontinental Film chronicled the agony and revival of the Mexican nation.

"There may be a chance to see Miss Winthrop in action," said Perkins.

He hastened toward one of a group of raw wooden barracks in the centre of the camp. To Latimer the first glimpse of this mammoth factory of make-believe brought back in a burst of pungent, wistful memory, the sensations of a boy's visit to the circus half a century ago. Perkins, his play, his wife, his children, the woman coughing in the kitchen, were swept away in a rush of carnival spirit.

From the outside it was an ugly wooden barn they were entering. Within, it was the courtyard of a *hacienda*, complete with fountain, orange trees, and ancient Indian squaws in costume. There they found working itself out an episode in the tragic love of Juanita, daughter of the fiery Don Alvarez, for the handsome young American lieutenant. It is not necessary to enter into the details

of the plot. It was a prize scenario selected from three thousand manuscripts. At the precise moment, Juanita was striving to guard her fatal secret from the searching questions of the stern old hidalgo. Juanita was Miss Winthrop; but Latimer's attention went first, not to her, but to Baby.

That infant stood beside the camera operator, a florid, perspiring bulk in shirt-sleeves, and shouted orders—at whom? Yes, at the great Miss Winthrop, among others. It was a different Baby from the surly, half-tamed mastiff whom Gladys paraded in her auto and forced to eat out of her hand. This was his hour, his regular daily hour of mastery; in a professional way, to be sure, but still, mastery. To Latimer at that moment Baby was overwhelming, Napoleonic.

Juanita was registering indignant amazement at the drift of her stern parent's inquiries.

"Scorn! scorn!" shouted Baby. "That's it! You're a daughter of the Tropics and you'd as soon as not slip a knife into the venerable greaser. Blaze at him! Shrive! him up! I know you are innocent, but you've got to convince Jones."

("Jones," whispered Perkins, "is the father.")

It was evident to Latimer that a great deal of the Winthrop magic that had enthralled six con-

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tinents and Polynesia, must be credited to this transformed, demiurgic Baby. In justice to Gladys it must be recorded, however, that she did not fall too often under the hot rain of Baby's reproof. For minutes at a stretch she went through her absurd mummery with a fluency of gesture, a lightning play of those world-famous eyes, that fascinated Latimer.

"Superb," he said. "But as for the other, impossible!"

He was referring to Jones, whom even Latimer's untrained judgment found a rather wooden Alvarez.

Baby raged at the hidalgo.

"Snarl, for God's sake, snarl, Jonesy! Look as if you'll eat her if she don't out with the truth. My God, no! You ain't making love to her! You ain't trying to sell her a bungalow on Flushing Bay! You are telling her that if she be false to her country and her faith, then, by the memory of her sainted mother, you'll show her! There's royal blood in your veins, Jonesy; you're a descendant of kings; bite her—that's better—oh, gosh!"

"A pitiful performance," hissed Latimer. "Not a trace of the fire and dignity of the Castilian strain. Why, any one—"

This time Baby caught his words and turned. A flush of gratification colored that heavy countenance, and his greetings were cordial. Miss Winthrop broke out of the scene to seize Latimer's hands in her own and beam welcome. She was far less pleasing in her ghostly make-up of powder and pigment than in her normal self, and she knew it; but they were the trappings of her fame.

"Do you like me, Professor Latimer?" she demanded.

"You are wonderful, *mi Juanita*," he said, patting her hand. "But your father, if I may venture to say so, fails to do you credit."

"Then suppose you play Don Alvarez to me?"

He hesitated, looked about him, received an assenting smile from Perkins, and was lost.

"I dare say, with a knowledge of the Spanish character and the elements of Latin-American history, one might—"

"Fine!" said Baby, who was quite as eager as Gladys to exhibit himself in action. "You'll find all the clothes you want in the next house. Archibald will show you."

"But is it essential to array one's self in all this?" said Latimer.

Miss Winthrop insisted that the sense of being

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entirely in the picture would react favorably on his art. When Latimer emerged from the dressing-room in the habiliments of Alvarez, Baby's professional eye gave approval. Latimer was not of the Quixote build, but the vivid, massive face in its frame of white beard, the eyes alight with the zest of adventure, were eloquent of the noble blood of Spain. Jonesy, quite free from resentment, whispered to Perkins,—

"The old boy has my job whenever he wants it."

Latimer took his stand near the fountain. Perkins, in his capacity as deputy assistant editor, read out the script for the scene. Baby gave him a few hints as to distance and attitude. Latimer strode forward, raised his arm in menace over his daughter, and balked.

"What do I say?" he asked.

"What do you want to say?" said Baby.

"I distinctly recall seeing Miss Winthrop and Mr. Jones address each other."

Baby grinned.

"I am afraid the author forgot to put in the dialogue. It's up to you, professor."

"Say anything that comes into your head, Dr. Latimer," counseled Perkins.

Miss Winthrop showed him how. She swam

forward, threw one arm around his neck, and said,—

"Good-morning, father. Do you think it will rain to-morrow, Professor Latimer? You sent for me?"

He was an apt pupil. Pulling the fatal letter from his pocket, he flourished it before her eyes, tapped it with a menacing finger, and said, "Daughter, we the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, what is the meaning of this?"

In Juanita's wondrous eyes affection gave way to the first premonitions of peril.

"I don't understand you, father. One times two is two, two times two is four, three times two is six, father, you do not mistrust me?"

"Punch, professor, more punch!" shouted Baby.

Latimer tore Juanita's hand from his neck, glared at her from beneath lowered eyelids, and thundered,—

"Juanita, last week the U-boats sank twenty-three ships of over 1600 tons and thirty-seven ships of less than 1600 tons. Will you answer?"

She clasped her hands in entreaty.

"Four times five is four times five is four times five. Won't you believe me?"

Latimer seized her by the shoulders. In his face paternal love and fanatic hatred of the Americanos contended for mastery.

"Daughter," he cried passionately, "if the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides, by the memory of your sainted mother, it will be so."

And then confusion overtook him. He stammered, laughed, went hot with shame, and ran for the dressing-room amid the plaudits of a hilarious audience.

Miss Winthrop in her boudoir tent gave them tea out of a silver urn presented to her by a prince of Siam.

"Now that you are one of us, Dr. Latimer, what do you really think of our work?" she asked.

Latimer was diplomatic.

"In respect to range of appeal, the history of art has seen nothing like it," he said. "Yet I must confess that to me the one thing in the theatre is the spoken word. Now a voice like yours, Miss Winthrop—what might not one do with it?"

She beamed upon him.

"Some day, Dr. Latimer, perhaps—"

She was about to honor him with her confidence,



"Punch, Professor, more punch!" shouted Baby

but Latimer suddenly put down his tea-cup, jumped up, and turned to the door.

"Your indulgence for a moment, Miss Winthrop, but I must see Jones."

She wondered and gave regal consent.

He found the Mexican father drinking bottled beer in the shadow of the oleanders. At the sight of Latimer, the old hidalgo, with perfect muscular adjustment, cleared a space on the table with one hand, reached behind with the other for another bottle, and pushed forward a chair with his foot.

Latimer's face was red and he breathed rapidly.

"I am afraid I cannot stay, Mr. Jones, but I want to ask your pardon."

"Sure," said the noble Castilian. "For what?"

"I came into the camp a guest," said Latimer. "I presumed to speak in criticism of your work without the justification of the most elementary acquaintance with your art. It was a procedure which I feel was neither intelligent nor decent."

The hidalgo got to his feet.

"There's nothing to pardon, Dr. Latimer. In the first place I *am* a rotten actor. In the second place I had forgotten what you said."

"It was wanton impertinence on my part," de-

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clared Latimer. "I insist that you recognize it as such and forgive me."

Jones held out his hand.

"I trust we shall always be friends," he said gravely.

Latimer took the hand in both his own.

CHAPTER VI

LADIES ERRANT

THE latest phases of the struggle for Mexican freedom had been happily devoid of casualties for the Intercontinental Film army, and three enameled bedsteads in the hospital tent stood unoccupied while the doctor and the two nurses helped out in the mob scenes. In hospital, therefore, Latimer slept the sleep of the just; that is to say, he had a tolerable night of rest once he did succeed in going to sleep.

For the sleep of the just is really after the following manner: It begins with a wide-eyed review of the events of the day. In the course of this retrospect the victories and fulfilments shrink to very moderate dimensions, but the failures and *faux pas* flare out in the dark like an illuminated whiskey sign in the theatrical district. The just man stares up at the ceiling from above his coverlet and groans with the memory of things that could have been so much better said. So Latimer lay on his hospital bed and groaned and blushed with

shame at the thought of his incursion into the art of the movies, and whenever a particularly acute twinge of remorse shot above the general level of repentance, he gasped and caught his breath.

But when the docket for the day has been cleared the just man who is trying to go to sleep turns him to the burdens of the next day, to the countless duties that clamor for action, and which one shall be taken up first? Likewise there are pitfalls which strew the path of to-morrow and which must be avoided, by Heavens, which must be avoided! "I made a very recognizable fool of myself," whispered Latimer. "I must see to it that this never happens again; never, never." Thus comforted, this particular just man fell asleep sometime after midnight.

He had made his farewells to Gladys and Baby the night before. Breakfast was perfunctory, but cheered by the presence of Perkins, who, aided and abetted by a brilliant, warming sun, succeeded in winning Latimer back to happiness. The better part of the morning went into a tour of camp inspection under the playwright's guidance. When Latimer was finally on the road turned south, Perkins gave him escort for the first difficult mile. On the other side of the creek Perkins said good-bye.

"We shall be here for a fortnight, at least," he ventured. "If you set up headquarters anywhere in the vicinity we may meet. I do a bit of walking myself after the day's work."

"But in any case I am to have my tickets for the first night," insisted Latimer. "The very best of good fortune to you and your family."

He found yesterday's peace again on the road. It ran hard by the creek for a good hour until Latimer caught the glint of water to the left. It could not be the main stream, whose course he could trace well towards the horizon. Therefore this must be some tributary which, from its direction, would enter the creek not more than half a mile away. The junction point he assumed would be in a grove of silver birches that offered the promise of an admirable halting place for lunch and reflection. And it was so. He was hesitating between a great boulder which jutted into the creek like a local Gibraltar, and a grassy peninsula with milder scenic effects but more comfort, when he heard voices.

"Don't be a fool, Polly, he won't touch you." It was evidently a young girl who spoke, but the crisp scorn of the words was masculine.

"I dare not, Winifred, he's eyeing me so," replied a tremulous contralto.

Through the heart of the birch grove a dirt road entered the highway, and a little way up, two women in khaki skirts, with knapsacks, were revealed in a tableau of daring youth and middle-aged panic.

"You only have to whistle and walk ahead and he'll scamper off," the young platoon leader was saying. Now it was obviously she who had been called Winifred.

"There's such a look in his eye. I am sure he is going to charge," said Polly.

"But a calf don't climb fences," Winifred stormed.

"He might go right through, if his mind's made up," said Polly.

It may have been Polly's unmanly fear that roused the enemy, but it is a fact that as Latimer hastened forward the calf cast off all semblance of self-control. He galloped up and down the fence, seeking, as Polly believed, a gap in the wire for his sortie.

"Polly," cried Winifred. "Even a rabbit—"

"Permit me, ladies," said Latimer, coming up on the run. "It should be a simple matter to repel the animal from the proximity of the fence."

But the calf refused to be intimidated by the ar-

rival of enemy reinforcements and manœuvered faster than ever. As for Latimer, he was in a quandary. His mere personal presence having failed to shatter the calf's morale, he found himself utterly at a loss regarding the proper form of admonition for that particular animal species. He racked his memory for the various forms of address employed to inspire fear or respect in domestic breeds, but he could think only of "Whoa," and "Scat," of which the second was obviously impossible, and the first might be taken as an invitation instead of a warning. He had almost decided that "Hi," was a universal term of reproach when Winifred met the emergency by picking up a stone and hurling it, with moderate speed and aimed to hit the ground, in the general direction of the enemy. It struck the calf fair in the side, whereupon the foe bellowed and dashed away across lots.

Polly came forward, her thin face aglow with the emotion of battle, and thanked Latimer for his intervention. But Winifred's lips curled up into something that set out to be contempt and ended as clear laughter. It impressed Latimer as the most stimulating sound he had heard since the beginning of his pilgrimage.

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"Thank your companion," said Latimer. "While I was debating ways and means she revealed a capacity for action which reminds one strongly of Lloyd George."

But Polly insisted on being grateful, though somewhat incoherently, for she needed one eye and half her mind to keep on the receding peril. The trend of her remarks was that somehow the calf had yielded to Latimer's personal magnetism, rather than Winifred's direct onslaught.

"Polly is a womanly woman," explained Winifred. "That is why she is afraid of a calf and why she assumes that she could have been rescued only by a man."

"We all have our susceptibilities," said Latimer. "Remember Shylock. Strong men have been known to be afraid of mice."

"Polly is timid about the whole animal kingdom," said Winifred. "If there is anything Polly is more afraid of than cows, it's poultry. Yesterday we were held up by an infuriated hen."

"Under the circumstances I should imagine you would find walking in the open country a hardship," said Latimer.

"I do it as a discipline," said Polly, with a winning humility. "I love the open too much to give

it up for its dangers. Wouldn't you call it a kind of sea-sickness?" she pleaded.

"Unquestionably, madam," Latimer responded gravely. "As I have intimated, there are soldiers who charge the machine guns in a palsy of cowardice. Your merit is no less."

With that he had won the esteem and confidence of Winifred, who gave him a look of comradeship out of her laughing eyes. She was holding the lead, with Latimer and Polly mechanically in step. There was a glint of the paternal in the smile with which these broke off their talk every little while to approve of Winifred. She was a fitful companion: now in rank with the other two and an amused ear to their conversation; now falling behind; but for the greater part in extended skirmish line well ahead, with an eager eye for the multifarious exhibits of the Big Show they were traversing. She stopped to peer up into the trees for the source of twitterings and chirpings which she imitated or burlesqued. She stooped for pebbles which she studied with intense concentration and threw to one side. She ran suddenly to the side of the road and made reconnaissance among the bushes and the undergrowth. She was joyously at home.

"Don't you think she's a dear?" said Polly. She



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looked up at Latimer in a glow of adoration for the girl that gave almost beauty to the sallow elderly face.

"Emphatically," said Latimer, his eyes on the girl. "She's like a bird let loose. Presumably this is your summer outing?"

"It is. And Winifred had such a dreadful time of it before we came out."

"She works as hard as she plays?"

"Oh, dreadfully. I could never stand it. It needs youth, and courage and hope."

"Miss Winifred is—"

"With the Factory Inspection Department."

"Oh, naturally," and Latimer looked at the girl with a shamed sense of his own futility.

"Only it's not the work," said Polly. "It's the brutal politics. The people in the Department don't want women."

"Strange," said Latimer. "Since women have been accustomed to take orders for several thousand years, it should make them admirable tools for the most exacting politician employer."

"But we won't take graft," said Polly.

Latimer turned to face her.

"You mean bribes? For winking at the violation of the factory laws?"

"That's just it."

He could not conceive it.

"The factory people dislike us because women are inclined to fuss," said Polly. "We don't take a business-like view of the matter. Whereas the men are—reasonable." Polly snapped out her words viciously. "Many of them double their salaries by being reasonable."

Latimer stopped in his tracks.

"But these inspectors who take bribes, they are not of the wealthy classes?"

"They begin by being poor."

"They come, then, from the working people," said Latimer, his face flushed and his nostrils twitching. "Virtually they come from the same families as the girls who toil in the factories. And when they take money for permitting the violation of the fire laws—it is their own sisters—their own flesh and blood—oh, it's too horrible!"

"That's our competitive system," said Polly, with an attempt at class-conscious ferocity which she carried off only so-so; Latimer thought she was repeating a lesson.

"Competitive system nonsense!" he shouted. "It is the old, unregenerate heart of man. I defy you to create an economic system which will relieve

men from the temptation of burning up their own sisters."

"Of course, I know very little about it," said Polly, succumbing to masculine assertion.

"I beg your pardon," said Latimer. "I am still too easy a victim of my temper. You were saying of Miss Winifred?"

"They did their best to drive her out of the department. She stood it like a brick. They humiliated her. They found errors in her reports. They corrected her grammar—the illiterate brutes! They sent her out in the company of dirty men with a jowl and smelling of whiskey. But she stuck. Finally she received a hint that her resignation would be appreciated."

"The infamous scoundrels!" cried Latimer.

"Then Winifred called on the Chief and told him if the persecutions didn't stop she would be compelled to ask for *his* resignation."

"Oh, splendid!" yelled Latimer, and Winifred, far ahead, turned and looked at them. "But how?"

"She told the Chief she would have him up on charges before the Governor. The brute was frightened; he waited to see what would happen. Well, plenty happened. The very next day there was a

story in the *Times* about the Factory Department, and the afternoon papers began poking around. Winifred knows dozens of newspaper boys—they were always interviewing her anyhow. Why, one of them once spent two weeks on a story about the girls who make ladies' wrappers, and he interviewed Winifred twice a day for two weeks straight—I wonder why."

"To be sure, I wonder why," said Latimer as he watched Winifred doing the manual of arms in the middle of the road quite like a professional "Shoulder arrrms, hrumph! Order arrrms, Grumph! By the right flank. Umppp!"

"And she knows all the sob sisters," said Polly, "and the editors of all the radical weeklies, and all the millionaire women suffragists. At any rate, in just one week the *Sun* announced that there was a project under way to organize a Factory Workers' Protective Association."

"Bravo!" and Latimer clapped.

"Only they didn't have to. The Chief called in Winifred and said there was a vacancy in the Children's Welfare Department at \$3000 a year for which he would be glad to recommend her. Winifred said she could get on fine on \$1200. And the

bullying stopped. Now she is resting. Isn't he wonderful?"

They were once more up with Winifred. She had been standing still and pitching stones into the water.

"I thought it was a turtle and I tried to stir him up, the silly old conservative," she said, with great disgust. "But it's only a stone. Lunch, Polly."

The two women had breakfasted early and made nine miles. Woman's capacity to move mountains on a lettuce-sandwich is one of the wonders of thermodynamics. Latimer, accepted as a companion, was nevertheless excluded by a two-thirds vote from any share in the preparation of the meal. Winifred went ahead to scout for a camping place, and Polly continued to prattle.

Of herself Polly told very little, though Latimer did pick up the suggestion that she was in some branch of educational work; at least, teaching was mentioned, and once the phrase "self-expression." Latimer tried hard to place this Polly in the world of aggressive, fermenting, modern young womanhood which the outline of Winifred's history had opened up. For that matter there were in Polly, too, odd revelations of youth, quick decisive little gestures, bits of modern slang, which alternated

with sharp lapses into an older, more timid, type of woman. Especially were there definite slips in logic which Latimer classified as early New England. It was as if Winifred had deliberately adopted for her walking companion a chaperon who was sufficiently in sympathy with herself to insure liberty, but sufficiently a chaperon.

Only once was Latimer alarmed, and that was when Polly, after a perfunctory remark of his on the lovely woodland they were crossing, asked him if he did not think there was a soul in trees and in stones as well as in people, and whether he did not think these souls were working their way upwards through eternity in a cycle of spiral existences—

It made Latimer fear the worst, but just then came Winifred's haloo: "Found it!"

She was on her knees, bending to the stream; and as they two came up, she was plunging her face into the water, again and again.

"How Phidias would have appreciated this factory inspector," thought Latimer.

"Towels, Polly," said Winifred.

Latimer's contribution to the repast was a box of bon-bons which Miss Winthrop had put into his knapsack with her own hands. Winifred ate four

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bon-bons, wiped her fingers on the grass, and drew from a pocket in her blouse a silver cigarette case which she offered to the others. Latimer accepted, but Polly blushed and shook her head. Whereupon Winifred hissed at her "Coward!", lit her own cigarette, and lay back on the grass with her hands behind her head, discharging smoke rings into the azure. But Polly pulled out knitting needles and wool.

And while the ladies respectively smoked and knitted, Latimer bragged.

He bragged about Miss Winthrop and the prestige of her personal acquaintance which he could claim. He tried not to be overweening, but at the same time it was not amiss to show this very modern young person in khaki and gaiters that he, Latimer, was not quite a backnumber. He, too, was in touch with the pulse of the times. He had—hem!—been privileged to see Miss Winthrop in action before the camera, a privilege—hum!—which was not too common. Of his own excursion into the art of the movies he made no mention.

"I've seen her on the screen," said Winifred. "She is very good."

Oh, but much more than that, insisted Latimer. Behind the artist there was the real woman. Con-

sider the remarkable things she had said about life in general while they—hem!—were taking tea together. Miss Winthrop had said, for instance, what would she not give for a bit of the simpler things of life, the things without which no woman's life is complete.

"Oh, slush," said Winifred softly.

"I beg your pardon?" said Latimer.

"Just thinking aloud, Dr. Latimer. Please go on."

Miss Winthrop had also said that after all a woman's place is with her children.

"Why with her's?" snapped Winifred. "There are two million nursemaids and governesses in this country whose place seems to be with other women's children."

"That is a quibble," said Latimer. "I insist that Miss Winthrop was stating an incontrovertible truth, and one that does her infinite credit, when she said that there is nothing higher in the world for a woman than a good man's love."

Winifred sat up with a jerk, and threw her cigarette into the water.

"Disgusting little creature," she sniffed.

"Winifred!" cried Polly.

Latimer grew indignant, leaped mentally to the

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fray, and gave in. Ah, well; if Winifred ate Miss Winthrop's bon-bons and called her a disgusting little creature, that was only another revelation of the modern conscience.

"I wasn't referring to her, of course, but to her stale opinions," said Winifred. "Don't you know, Dr. Latimer, that children and a good man's love are the sure-fire hits in every vaudeville house in the land? This fluff about the sanctity of childhood makes me tired. What is the use of lying about it? We don't treat children as if they were sacred, and they aren't. The trouble with this world to-day is children."

"Children have been the world's burden, the world's victims, and the world's salvation," said Latimer. "We can only hope."

"Things won't change for the better till we have put a stop to the overproduction of rickety children," said Winifred, helping herself to another of Miss Winthrop's bon-bons. "How are you going to clean up this wretched capitalist system if you keep on pouring unlimited supplies of children into the labor hopper? There ought to be a legal maximum for poor families. Working people apprehended in the possession of more than three children, at shorter intervals than four years be-

tween any two, should be a misdemeanor. There can't be two opinions about it."

Latimer turned a slow but sure red and became interested in the other side of the creek. Then bracing himself:

"And how would you solve the problem of rickety children?"

"Get rid of rickety marriages," said Winifred. "Clean out the whole cesspool."

Several generations of Puritan ancestry tinged Polly's sallow cheek.

"I know of men and women who are beautifully married," she protested.

"Romantic old goose," sneered Winifred. But either out of deference for Polly's antiquated traditions or more probably in the natural rebound of her own young spirit, she was soon away from the thin sociological ice. Under a question or two from Latimer she spoke about herself and her work, without pose and without humility. Her hands clasped about her knees—

"Polly, don't you dare touch those dishes until I'm ready," she called out.

"But while you are resting, my dear?"

"East Haddam, 1825, that's your number, Polly," she stormed.

"Very well," sighed Polly and took up her knitting—

—her hands clasped about her knees, she told Latimer of her work, her friends, her enthusiasms, her pet hatreds, all that eager, young, forward-looking host which took itself so seriously, but perhaps not more seriously than its due; the little world of mingled Social Service and Bohemia, of yeasty ideals in which Syndicalism fraternized with the classic dance, and Freud with the Russian ballet. But Latimer only half listened to this familiar chronicle of labor lyceums, studios, secessionist art galleries, basement-restaurants. . . .

How dreadfully old were his own ideas! Some going back three thousand years perhaps, some to Adam Smith, some to John Stuart Mill. Whereas Winifred and her friends had philosophies so new that their authors had not yet gotten into the biographical dictionaries. True, he had dipped into Bergson, he had read several title pages of Sigmund Freud, and he was not unacquainted with H. G. Wells, as we have seen. He managed to bring the last fact into the conversation.

Yes, Winifred wanted to know, but had he read the three other books by Wells published in 1917?

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She told Latimer of her work



How then could he know what was Mr. Wells latest position about anything?

He apologized.

Yet his personal misgivings were lost in a deep wonder at Winifred herself. How could one be at the same time so joyous and so alive to the pain of things? She was very happy under social conditions which she had just described as a cesspool. In a world that was as wretchedly off as it possibly could be, she had astonishingly clear ideas on the relative merits of the dancing floors at the best hotels. Good heavens, thought poor Latimer, if our cities swarm with rickety children, if our marriage system is nothing better than bargain and sale, what difference does it make whether one ate at a little Dutch restaurant or in a Bulgarian tea-room, as Winifred seemed to think?

He was greatly depressed: but only until the business of the dish-washing supervened. In that sedative occupation there came to him the peace of a golden afternoon which lingered during the two-mile stretch they walked to the cross roads where the women stopped to say Good-by. There was no reason why he should not have taken the same road save that he did not wish to intrude. The ladies were bound for the home of friends just a few steps

beyond—the Grimsbys they called them—where they were to spend a week in numerous company, predominantly modern and insurrectionary.

Latimer shook hands heartily and watched them out of sight.

“Now that other one,” he thought—“Polly—there is something exceedingly ingratiating about her. I wonder who she is?”

Well, let us tell him.

CHAPTER VII

ART OF LIFE

POLLY earned her livelihood by teaching Spontaneous Self-expression in a Studio.

Once upon a time a studio was a place devoted to the practice of painting and sculpture. Then the other arts moved in; first music with its close associate, the dance; then literature; then interior decoration; then everything else that was not business or was trying not to be business. For instance, though the thing has not happened yet, we may confidently look forward to the time when the art of advertising biscuits and vacuum cleaners will be housed in Studios for Economic Suggestion.

But that is not all. In order to be the legitimate tenant of a studio it is not essential that one should be a practitioner of any art or profession. It is enough if one sympathizes. It is the same qualification that makes insurance brokers and hardware wholesalers eligible for the literary and scientific clubs of which they at present constitute a majority of the membership; like the National Geo-

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graphical Society for which you qualify by sympathizing with geography; or the Arctic Club for which it is required that one should sympathize with the Arctic Circle. So with art in general. Provided you seize the importance of Art in Life, not to speak of attaining the ultimate truth that Art is Life, you may equip a studio according to your means from the duplex affair in the West Fifties at \$3000 a year down to the front bedroom on East Eleventh Street which turns into a studio when the bed is covered with a bit of tapestry and becomes a divan.

I cannot help feeling that we have here one of those truly profound innovations that have signalized and facilitated our ascent through the ages; like the man who first bestrode a log and began the conquest of the seas, like the man who first tied a flint stone to a tree branch; like the man who first rubbed two sticks together; simple actions in themselves but revolutionary. With these must be classed the social forward leap involved in the transformation of the Home into the Studio and of living into the Art of Life.

But essentially the studio to-day is a place where the arts are less frequently practised than taught. It is what we used to call a schoolroom in the days

before art began to press so heavily on life. In every four out of five studios in New York, it is safe to say that tuition of some kind is given. Thus a partial list would show:

Foreign Language Studios
Physical Culture Studios
Music Studios
Studios of Dramatic Expression
Freud-Jung Studios
Studios of Classic Dancing
Studios of Modern Dance
Studios of Interpretative Dancing
Studios for Self-Development
Studios for Scientific Thought
Concentration Studios
Spiritual Relaxation Studios
Bahaistic Studios
Kindergarten Studios
Spontaneous Play Studios
Folk-Dance Studios
Folk-Myth Studios
Delsarte Studios
Eurhythmic Studios
Spontaneous Self-expression Studios.

And incidentally studios for instruction in painting and sculpture.

Polly came to New York from Michigan with

several vague ambitions and one fixed purpose. That purpose was that whatever happened, even starvation, she would never again teach public school. Ten years were enough. Of the vague ambitions, the one least shadowy was that which hovered about—yes—the theatre. She had shown at home a brightness of gesture and speech and a gift for sympathetic mimicry that made well-meaning friends ask why not the stage? Such suggestions Polly brushed aside and secretly cherished; until one day she told the School Superintendent what she thought of him, and took the train for New York.

Fortunately or unfortunately she brought with her from Michigan a sense of humor and a strain of Puritan blood. She was not sufficiently bitten with the stage to persist after the first timid approaches to the managers. Now the New York managers are better than their reputation for blunt speaking. Instead of brutally telling her the truth, namely that she had not the physical gifts to compel success on the stage and that her talents were not sufficiently conspicuous to atone for that prime defect, they shifted in their chairs, looked out of the window and told her that the theatre was in its decline, that the movies had killed the drama, and

that Broadway stars were facing the choice between the Pictures and destitution. They were rather nice about it and Polly saw exactly what they were driving at. Also a glimpse of one or two theatrical booking offices sent a slight chill through the New England blood in her veins. She sat in her room one night and cried and hated herself for a coward and a prude, and turned away from the theatre with a sense of great relief.

For literature, which was next in the line of her dim aspirations, she found herself handicapped by an excess of several very human qualities. Polly had the fatal gift of a warm heart and a ready tongue. It was all well enough for her Michigan friends to tell her she only need write as she talked and the magazine editors would fight for her copy. It could not be done. If some one had concealed a dictaphone under Polly's breakfast table, he might have gathered, in the course of a fortnight, plenty of material which the magazine editors would have licked into commercial shape. But when Polly sat down with pen and paper she grew tongue-tied. And once more New England intervened to her harm. With effort she might have learned how to turn her bright everyday chatter into salable copy, but was it Literature? And what would Lowell

and Emerson and Oliver Wendell Holmes do in their graves?

Ultimately she did what her friends in Michigan would never have dared to mention. She acquired stenography, and after six months with a hardware firm on Barclay Street, she got as near to literature as she henceforth hoped to approach. She became assistant secretary in a publisher's office and within a year she was secretary. She carried in her head all the details of the firm's business as far back as the year 1907 and took dictation from a man who smoked black cigars to which she grew partly accustomed and commanded an imperfect literary style which she revised as a matter of course. He would vindicate his authority by picking out one out of a dozen corrections in his copy and insisting on having it changed back, and on that basis they got on very well, until the long hours and the lack of air and light and the black cigars and the tarnished halo of literature as seen from the inside wore on her. She knew many women by this time who were self-supporting and their own masters. They took long vacations, owned shacks in the suburbs, and occasionally borrowed money from her, but were always free—and young. The old stirrings towards art awoke; in part, presum-

ably, because Polly felt she was getting older, and you always go to art to replace the vitality of youth.

Ultimately she hired a studio and opened classes in Spontaneous Self-expression; and so entered the ranks of the Spasmodic or Upside-down Professions.

Polly was amazed, when she came to look about for an escape from the publishing business, to find how many women in New York, in the transition from the parasite to the producer, were earning a livelihood against most of the laws of economics and some of the laws of nature. On the Woman's Page in the evening newspapers there had grown up an entire literature connected with these upside-down occupations. In fact it was the essence and attraction of these occupations that they should be upside down. Polly read of young widows with dependent children who raised mushrooms in the cellars of uptown apartment houses. There were women who grew violets for the market on board abandoned canal-boats. There were women who toured the countryside in a Ford, giving lessons on the piano to farmers' children. It is probable that these professions were really created by the editors of the Woman's Page. They began,

legitimately enough, by chronicling unusual cases of woman's enterprise in search of a living. They began with women who hired themselves out as chaperons to motherless girls from out of town, or women who took up abandoned farms and worked them for a profit.

And then it was as it always has been in the newspaper business. The appetite for novelty, the passion for the headline, clamored for stronger meat. The Home Page editors, in a frantic hunt for copy, invented professions on the typewriter, only to have the fiction taken up seriously by credulous women eager for employment. But always the rule remained that these professions should be upside down; that mushroom growing, which would naturally be conducted in the country or at least in the suburbs, should be practised near Eighth Avenue; that violets should be raised in abandoned canal boats or retired freight cars or anywhere but in the natural soil; whereas piano-teaching which is preëminently an urban occupation should be conducted like a milk-route, by a woman touring the countryside in a Ford.

The newspapers helped to create the profession of teaching Self-expression, but the newspapers were not the only factor in this instance. There

entered here the spirit of a new age working for the Emancipation of the Individual. As more and more people learned that it is not merely a Right, but a Duty, to be Free, to Live One's Life, to Sense, and React, and give Spontaneous Utterance to the Joy of Things, the demand naturally arose for schools and teachers of spontaneity.

Polly herself could not help wondering sometimes at the extraordinary number of things that people were now learning to do spontaneously which once upon a time they did as a matter of course. Only it is not quite right to say that they learn or that the teachers of spontaneity teach. They only help us reacquire. They stimulate the Self to reconquer its own capacities. What the teacher of spontaneity does, if I may quote from a circular, is to knock the Shackles from the Spirit, and let the Self which is Life, speak out in that Identification with the Throb of the Universe which is Joy. In some circulars the Throb of the Universe is Creative Love.

The fact remains that the spontaneous way of performing such comparatively simple actions as breathing, eating, sleeping, and playing has been restored to a generation which is fast making life

an art and art a life. Oddly enough, the most elementary actions are the hardest to be spontaneous about. Philosophers who have defined man as a talking animal, on the assumption that speech is a fundamental human faculty, plainly knew nothing of Voice Culture. When they defined man as a walking animal, they knew nothing of the Rhythm of Motion. Obviously there is all the difference in the world between the way in which our grandmothers learned to toddle about the room and the way in which the ideal child of to-day may learn to place his feet so as to Relate himself to Existence, to the Significance of Things, and to the Utterance of Joy in one's Self.

Why, what could be simpler, at first sight, than for a mother to recognize her own offspring? Yet one of Polly's friends, the young woman in fact who inducted her into the upside-down professions, had written a book entitled, "How to Know Your Own Child." And a useful book it was, too. People, for the sake of getting their money's worth, will undergo extraordinary hardships. A great many mothers, having paid \$1.30 net for "How to Know Your Own Child," set themselves to get the value of their money or else to prove that the author did not know what she was talking about.

And so they learned. They did not discover anything new about their children but they found out a good many things they had forgotten.

Sometimes Polly's New England ancestors bestir themselves and suggest that the business of teaching Spontaneous Self-expression in a studio is humbug.

But it is not so. Polly gives value for cash received. What she does is to take timid girls and diffident motherly women, endowed with no particular gift of beauty or grace or spirit—and all the more timid and lonely in the knowledge of that—Polly takes these shy, learning women and puts them into cheesecloth veilings that go by the name of Greek draperies. They remove their shoes and loosen their hair and do any number of ridiculous and helpful things,—a bit of calisthenics, or a few moments of rhythmic breathing, or if the spirit moves them, they break into a few semi-orgiastic steps to the music of Debussy, or they may pick up a sonnet of Shakespeare's or a piece of verse by Robert Frost and dance its meaning as they feel it. Polly does not force the pace. She lets the atmosphere of the studio wrap itself about her disciples. Some of her pupils have attained freedom and self-expression by putting on a green robe, sitting on

the floor, and chanting Walt Whitman in a dim light.

Thus the years, in goodly number, have passed for Polly, and she has grown perceptibly gray and more heavily dependent on the friendship of young people, and progressively susceptible to Oriental thought by way of Los Angeles and Boston. This exposes her to the brutal jeers of young materialists like Winifred, who nevertheless are exceedingly fond of her and have made a system of breaking in on her lonely housekeeping—uncooked cereals largely, in one corner of the studio behind a screen. Winifred's mannish gaiety is welcomed. For Polly has her moments of doubt when Greek costumery and barefoot dancing and the mystic vocabulary of the Orient are like sawdust in the mouth. Every little while she drops from the Buddhistic terminology that goes with Spontaneous Self-expression into straight Michigan and becomes a wistful little woman of the kind our grandmothers knew; especially when she is tired after a long afternoon of private pupils in her studio.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PILGRIM

Now, as Latimer stood at the guide-post and pondered whether he should hold to the highway or follow the dirt road which ran off at right angles, to lose itself immediately around the edge of a pine grove, there came from that quarter a sharp cry of pain in a woman's tones, and the rasp of grinding metal like a brake suddenly released. The clatter of machinery and the outcry could mean only one thing.

Latimer ran forward. It was as he supposed. A young woman was leaning, white-faced, against the hood of a disreputable automobile, clasping her right wrist to press back the pain with which her face was twitching.

"Are you badly hurt?" cried Latimer.

His first impulse was to drop fifty years from his shoulders and to kick out savagely at the crank-handle which had done the mischief, and now, in utter lack of conscience, hung there with the most innocent face in the world. Latimer almost ex-

pected it to begin wagging pleasantly, like the tail of a dog who has tumbled you into the gutter with the very best intentions.

As it happened, Latimer's commonplace inquiry was the very best procedure he could have adopted. The white face quivered; there was a gush of tears and a violent outbreak of sobbing. It was exactly like a child who manages to hold a rein on his sorrow until a word of sympathy opens the flood-gates. She was not much more than a child, and the pain seemed to depart as quickly as it had come, under the ministration of tears. She let her right arm hang limp and with the other hand dried her eyes. Having done so, she stood upright and unashamed and smiled at Latimer.

"I am much better, thank you," she said. "I could be home in a few minutes if only I can get the old thing going."

"Let me try it," said Latimer.

"Take care. It's vicious," she replied. "Father has been wanting to destroy it, and he will this time if he finds out. But we can't afford it."

In the interest of public morals that automobile should have been suppressed.

There are two kinds of ignoble old age. One is decrepit, leery, tottering to the grave. It is the

kind which moralists can use as a warning and a text. The other is the infinitely more dangerous kind. It reveals a sound constitution beneath the rags and defilement. It cannot be used as a text, for it works the other way. It seems to show that a man may drink, loaf, and otherwise transgress, and yet keep going physically. That is the kind of old age which comes to Ford machines converted to industrial uses in the country.

The car Latimer was now trying to crank up was streaked with red rust and thick with mud. Wherever there was iron-work to bend it was bent, twisted, wrinkled. Where there was wood-work to chip and flake, it had done so. True, a wagon-body, affixed to the chassis, supplied an element of respectability, but it could not overcome the impression of the dissolute forward part of the car. It was like a staid citizen tooling along arm-in-arm with the village drunkard.

Nevertheless the condition of the machine carried no imputation on the character of its owners. It is simply an unwritten law of nature that a passenger Ford turned to business uses should look like a hoodlum.

Twice Latimer leaped back to escape injury from the crank-handle. His right arm was a torture, but

he would have perished sooner than acknowledge defeat at the hands of that obscene vehicle. The girl would have made him desist but for her father's threat. Nevertheless, after ten minutes of ineffectual effort she was about to say that it was enough, when the spark caught and the ancient reprobate started into life.

"You cannot drive with your injured hand," said Latimer, "and though my experience is limited, it may suffice."

He helped her into the car, rearranged the market-baskets in the wagon behind, and set off at a conservative six miles an hour. The girl sat silent while he steered with a degree of caution which at once revealed his amateur standing. He passed a hay-wagon going in the same direction with an anxious blast on the horn which evoked derision from the driver. He gave the signal again before taking an extremely shallow curve in the road, and rounded the promontory like a transatlantic liner making dock.

"My manner at the wheel is not impressive, but it is sound," he observed.

She laughed aloud, then blushed, begged his pardon mutely, and took refuge in conversation.

"You are not staying up at the big house?" she asked.

"What big house?"

"Only a little way down the main road; the Grimsby's; ever so many people are always visiting there."

"What kind of people?"

"Queer people," she replied.

"Then I must look them up," he said; but she missed his mild satire.

"We are from New York," she said. "We've been here three years. I love it now. Father says the same, but I think it's harder for him. It was such a change after all the years of night work."

Night work, thought Latimer. Was this a patrolman's daughter?

"Father was a newspaper man,"—and there was a lift of pride in her chin and eyes. "Perhaps you've heard of him—Manning, of the *Star*. He will be glad to know you. You'll stay for supper, won't you?"

"Assuredly I will," he said. "Are you making a success of farming?"

"We've done pretty well, considering it's only our third summer."

"I should say that was doing well. If you make money on a farm before half a dozen years—"

"Well, not making money," she said. "But we come out even, with what father does for the magazines."

Suddenly Latimer said,—

"I hope I am not impertinent, but why should a man of your years give up a fascinating profession to come out to this?"

Manning looked up quickly, turned away, and puffed steadily at his pipe. He was hesitating between a straightforward answer and frivolity.

"It's the regular thing, Dr. Latimer. When a good reporter dies, he goes in either for poultry or fruit."

"But when does a good reporter die, as you call it?"

Supper had been brought in from the kitchen by Margaret, and laid, rural fashion, in its entirety, before they sat down. Of the three, Latimer ate the most heartily, and Manning the least. To him the presence of a visitor from the clangorous world he had left behind was a summons to half-suppressed aches and desires.

"The good reporter dies when his soul is born,"

said Manning gravely. "Sooner or later it comes to most of us—the longing to stop writing things up and to begin to understand them. Sometimes it comes all at once. Hits you between the eyes."

"But who should understand life so well as you men whose business it is to follow it up day by day?" queried Latimer.

"That's just it," laughed Manning. "Day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. When I worked on a morning paper I was a fiend on life from the First Edition to the 4 A.M. Metropolitan. And when I was with the afternoon papers there wasn't very much in life that got away from me between 8 A.M. and 4.15 P.M. I saw so much of life that, before I had rushed one piece of it up the copy-tube, another chunk would be pawing at my elbow."

"Exactly," said Latimer; "a wealth of experience that no other profession can even suggest."

But Manning was not listening. His pipe hung cold in his hand and his gaze traveled beyond his auditors into the years of his pilgrimage.

"I've been through the mill," he said. "Police court, police headquarters, magistrate's court, city hall, copy desk, rewrite, city desk, legislature, dra-

matic, sport, legislature again, Washington, managing editor, and sometimes 'Fashions and Hints for the Home.' I've hobnobbed with gangsters and shirtwaist strikers and cabinet officers in rapid succession. The owner of the paper on which I grew up was death on stagnation. He was always punching us up by shuffling us about, and one week I would be rewriting press agent's dope and the next I would be flashing special correspondence from the capital."

"And to every swift stimulus an immediate reaction, which is life," said Latimer. "Else how could you do your work?"

"By not reacting at all," Manning replied. "By turning yourself into a confounded *tabula rasa*, all smeared over with tenement-house fires and cold-storage eggs and the Japanese peril. Just a machine grinding out the machine-made stuff that clutters the news sheets. After a while you sicken for a breath of reality."

Latimer waved him aside.

"You are suffering from the professional fallacy, the conviction held by every doctor, lawyer, preacher, and stockbroker that his is the one unkind fate."

"It's not so bad the first two years," said Man-

ning, "until you have graduated from police and the criminal courts. There, I admit, you touch on what is called life, though touch it is about all you can do. The only sincere stuff in the business is crimes and accidents. A man doesn't usually shoot his wife for publication, or fall under a motor-truck with his photograph ready for 64-screen reproduction. Everything beyond that is just formula and make-believe, acting and speaking for publication—politicians this way, and strike-leaders that way, and woman suffragists their own way. We are the family photographers of the world, and people come to us in their Sunday clothes. If they didn't we'd retouch them anyhow; make them, every one,—gangsters, society leaders, shop-girls, Secretaries of State,—say what we want them to say; which is what they want us to make them say. How many stories have you read of the Yale-Harvard football game?"

"Ever so many; and excellent bits of writing they usually are."

"Rubber-stamp," said Manning. "The newspaper profession is just one big Harvard-Yale story, the most interesting parts of which, except as to who won the game, are written several hours before the game. In all Yale-Harvard games, you

will recall, the railroad terminals in New York are jammed with pretty girls in furs and crimson or blue; the roads to New Haven swarm with high-priced automobiles; the ticket-speculators offer tickets at twenty-five dollars a pair; the Yale Bowl is one mass of color; the rival stands challenge each other in song; there is a nip in the air which is just right for football; the hotels in New York are crowded with jubilant bettors after the game; the beaten team goes home greatly cast down—all this happens in the newspaper offices twenty-four hours before the referee's whistle. It may all turn out to be true; it probably will be true; football games have always been like that in the papers. A police parade always elicits cheers for the fine body of men that goes swinging up Fifth Avenue. A fire always 'mushrooms.' When a national convention starts to cheer, the reporters pull out their watches—and the shouters know that they are being timed and act accordingly."

"That is a serious charge to bring against your own trade—it is falsification," said Latimer.

"Not at all," said Manning. "Just a time-saving device without which the business couldn't go on. Suppose you were managing editor, and the biggest story you can think of broke upon you—" He

stopped and searched. "What is the biggest piece of news you can imagine, Dr. Latimer?"

The other man examined the ceiling.

"Well, say an authenticated case of the persistence of life after death," he ventured.

"Bully!" cried Manning. His eyes sparkled, the color mounted to his forehead and his fingers twitched—was it for the missing pencil and copy-paper? Then he found himself. "Suppose you were in charge and that flash came over from the Associated Press. What would you do?"

"I should probably develop a violent headache," said Latimer.

"Here's what you'd do, Dr. Latimer. You'd yell up the tube to the make-up man to tear open the first page for a seven-column double-ribbon head. You'd then get the telegraph editor to write that head: 'Life Holds Beyond Grave Says French Savant.' You'd then turn loose several men on the Encyclopædia Britannica looking up opinions on immortality by Plato, Solomon, Lucretius, Thomas à Kempis, Mme. Blavatsky, and Huxley. You'd have the city room get all the local clergymen on the wire. You'd telegraph to President Wilson, Billy Sunday, President Eliot, Anna Howard Shaw, Henry Ford, Mary Pickford, the Pope, the Sultan,

and the Chief Rabbi of Petrograd. You'd have your Wall Street men interview Mr. Morgan as to the probable effect of immortality on the Stock Exchange. You'd ask the presidents of the insurance companies how immortality would affect their special business. Next day there would be follow-up stories with reproductions of the most famous paintings of the Resurrection. By the end of the week your hair would be slightly grayer, and if anybody mentioned immortality to you, you'd bite him. Next week something would break loose in Mexico."

"Let it come, who cares?" cried Latimer bringing his fist down on the table. In his mind he was tearing open front pages and writing ribbon heads.

Manning laughed. "Take the ten years I held down the managing editor's desk on the *Star*," he said. "From 1904 to 1914. For sheer dramatic interest there have been no other ten years to approach them."

"1789 to 1799?" mused Latimer. "Austerlitz to Waterloo? Well, perhaps not."

"I said dramatic, not significant," declared Manning. "From the standpoint of news-value there has been nothing like these ten years. Things that happen once in a hundred years, in five hundred

years, in five thousand years, things that can happen only once and never again—they all happened in that marvelous decade. It's been seven-column heads week after week almost. In one hundred and twenty-five years no President of the United States has been elected without the vote of the East. Woodrow Wilson turns the trick—though that was two years after I quit. For five thousand years China has been asleep. She wakes up in 1913, climbs out of bed, and sets up a republic. The mastery of the air can be achieved only once; the Wright brothers do it. The North Pole can be discovered only once; Peary nails it, and in connection therewith the biggest hoax in history—Cook; and for good measure Amundsen throws in the South Pole. The biggest earthquake in history: Messina. The biggest marine disaster: Titanic. And that's omitting second-class matter like a Turkish revolution, or a parliament for Russia, or England muzzling the House of Lords, or Carnegie giving away half a billion dollars. It's history gone crazy—that's what it was those ten years."

"Manning," said Latimer all at once, "did you ever study for the ministry?"

Manning looked at him open-mouthed.

"How did you know?"

"A mere conjecture"; and Latimer smiled. "I was really going to say that you are to be congratulated on having played the historian to a remarkable epoch."

"Historian nothing!" shouted Manning. "A blanked old dictograph—that's what I was." He pulled himself in. "Professionally I had just one gorgeous time. There wasn't a wad of display type in the shop I didn't have a chance to shove into the paper every other week. But the individual,—Manning,—what of him? His soul was starved for the lack of a little leisure to interpret the significance of his own headlines. A bloated megaphone through whom the march of evolution kept shouting the most astounding news to Constant Reader. For you, Dr. Latimer, the loss of the Titanic never brought up the problem of what to do with the dry-goods ad on the third page."

"Such problems are a stimulus in themselves," said Latimer.

"Stimulus is right. Ten years' steady diet of caviar and red-hot curry, until your palate goes dead, the gastric juices dry up, and you open your mouth like a frog under the electric needle. Asia meets Europe in battle and cleans up: 'Japs Smash Russ Line.' The dawn of liberty breaks

in Russia: 'Duma Flays Czar's Pact.' The Islamic world breaks open with a loud report: 'Abdul Flees Golden Horn.' I say it in all reverence, Dr. Latimer, but if I had been running a paper at the time of the Crucifixion—you know how I would have written its history, as you call it."

"My dear fellow, you are altogether too hard on yourself," said Latimer. "How many of us who are not in the newspaper business, and who have lived through these ten wonderful years, have really responded to them? You know those young fools who write for the radical magazines. They are always clamoring for the great Art that only life in its intense moments can produce. But what have our poets, painters, and musicians produced during these feverish ten years? So far as I can see, centuries have died since 1905 and the history of coming centuries has been born, and about all we can show for it is the extraordinary development of the moving-picture theatre. Be fair to yourself."

Manning shook his head.

"It wasn't a question of reasoning things out. The thing simply grew unbearable. And then came the war."

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"To be sure!" cried Latimer, leaning forward across the table. "Yes?"

"I quit," said Manning.

"But that's incredible. The biggest story of your career, as you would call it. Quit?"

Manning stared out into the dark wistfully.

"I didn't put in much sleep during that first night of the war. I planned my campaign. Special correspondents, photographers, contracts for the *London Times* dispatches, the *Matin* service, the *Novoye Vremya*, Washington; reorganizing the staff; half the fellows in the city room would have to be fired—it would be nothing but war news—and the price of white paper!—You have said it, Dr. Latimer. It was the biggest job I had ever faced, the biggest newspaper opportunity since newspapers were invented. What copy, my God, what copy! what headlines! A thousand years thrown into the stereotyper's cauldron and coming out fat, new metal—"Russ Army Enters Constantinople"; "French Crush Teuton Host"; "Kaiser Holds India,"—that's what was ahead of me.

"And then all at once things turned sour in the mouth. My soul, I said to myself, what will happen to the soul of John B. Manning? Was it to go through the same dizzy dance through this

biggest thing ever? And I knew that if I held out another day, the game would get me and there would never be another chance to stand aside, to try to understand. So I rang up the old man and resigned. In just a fortnight Margaret and I were down here. Thus you find me: 'Noted Scribe Tends Chicks.'"

He laughed, but it was not a success. Margaret rose, walked to her father, and put her arms around him.

Latimer's eyes smiled at them, but his thoughts were not on the immediate scene. Manning's last words came to him dimly; but there was no need for climax, exordium, or "Finis" to the man's story. Latimer knew him for a fellow rebel and pilgrim; rebel against the doctrine and rule of formula, and pilgrim in search of the answer. Had he found it? No, to judge from Manning's self-directed irony, and from the longings which reëchoed through his story for the din and whirl and grime of the newspaper office. Well, then, was there any likelihood of his, Latimer's, faring any better? The accumulating peace of his first day out of doors fell from him. He was once more adrift. "Brother," he addressed Manning silently, "you and I are in a parlous state."

Immediately came the rebound. No! Was not a splendid thing, rather, that Manning's soul should have found him out at his desk, over the make-up table, in the midst of his headlines and formulas? Was not the answer implicit in the question, the goal in the search? A subtle, ironic, pitying God had pretended to formulate a curse in Eden, and had concealed a blessing. Labor and Discontent; Labor to feed the body and Discontent to keep the soul alive. When Manning was grinding out his Extra-Special editions, he did well; and when he kicked out against it all, it was well; and now that he was searching, it was well.

"And you are happy?" Latimer heard himself saying.

Manning was playing with Margaret's hand on his shoulder.

"Yes."

"Restless sometimes?"

"Um—"

Margaret cautioned Latimer from behind her father's chair.

"And all the time you want for thinking?" said Latimer cheerily.

"Too much. More than is fair to this little girl. She does the heavy work while I consult my soul."

"You know it isn't so, father."

"No? Well, perhaps I earn my keep. It was rather hard work at first, after twelve years on a morning paper, adapting yourself to the poultry routine. The hours were so different."

"The dishes," cried Margaret. "Oh, my hot water!" And she bolted into the kitchen.

Manning got to his feet.

"That is a task I share in; if you will excuse me, Dr. Latimer."

"But you must let me pay for my supper by helping out."

"There is no need."

"I insist."

"Selah," said Manning. "The kitchen is nine by eight, but by careful juxtaposition we ought not to be too much in each other's way."

Latimer followed him out into the kitchen.

CHAPTER IX

THE LADY WHO HIRED A HALL

"DR. LATIMER," said Manning, as he put a fresh towel to a wet plate, "how do you think God is coming out of this war?"

But at that moment a refined hurricane swept through the dining-room in the shape of a lady in white crêpe, who swung a green parasol cane-fashion, though it was well past sunset. And out of the heart of the storm came a voice, high-pitched, insolently negligent of final consonants, and to Latimer suddenly pungent of uptown New York, calling, "Margaret, O Margaret, where are you, dear? I have such good news."

"Mrs. Jamieson," said Margaret quietly, and smiled as she went to greet her visitor.

They met on the threshold. Framed in the kitchen doorway, Mrs. Jamieson lived up accurately to the promise of her voice. Externally, at least, she was of her class, thought Latimer. That is to say, being a woman of nearly forty, she dressed like a girl of twenty-two, without going to the

vulgar excess of dressing like a girl of eighteen. The same touch of successful daring showed in the skilful details of facial make-up. Latimer saw the youthful play of a pair of intelligent gray eyes under sufficiently penciled brows, an elaborate coiffure, an alert, slender figure. Smart, thought Latimer with approval, and clever.

"Oh, I didn't know," said Mrs. Jamieson.

"We have with us to-night Dr. Latimer," Manning announced. "His services in the kitchen are only temporary. Mrs. Jamieson, a member of the fairly idle rich."

"How d' ye do?" said Mrs. Jamieson. She acknowledged Latimer's bow with fashionable curtness, and sat daintily on a chair that Margaret placed for her just on the other side of the door-sill; but not until she had kissed the girl. "My dear, it is almost too good to be true, but I really think I have got rid of it."

"Not the Auditorium?" said Margaret.

"Just that," replied the visitor exultantly.

Let us sum up Mrs. Jamieson in a few words. If she was, by birth and marriage, committed to great wealth, she had done something to escape her fate. It is unfortunate that a woman of society cannot try to make herself useful without eliciting

the cheap satirist's sneer about fashionable charity. It is a pity that she cannot sincerely feel the beat of modern life without incurring the suspicion of being just in the swim. Mrs. Jamieson had her box at the opera, but her preferences were for the noisy young impressionists. In literature she liked the younger Russians, and if she failed to recognize that Artzibasheff was only a caricature of the earlier giants, more pretentious critics than Mrs. Jamieson have sinned in the same manner. She mothered a young Irish poet, peddled his manuscripts among the publishers, and was suspected of paying out of her pocket for his first volume. She had energy and a good heart. She had made a bid for economic independence by establishing successively, but not successfully, a cigarette factory, a shop for the manufacture of grotesque sculptures, and a modern laundry.

She found her true sphere in war-relief work. She raised extraordinary sums of money for the Belgians and the Serbs, by working herself very hard, blackmailing her friends, and reducing all the young women of her acquaintance to a state of involuntary servitude as flower girls, programme girls, and booth pirates at her bazaars. But she also had her own views as to the issues of the war.

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Before we entered the conflict, she was bitter at Mr. Wilson's lukewarm support of the Allies. To whip up sentiment she planned a great public demonstration and to that end she hired the Auditorium with her own pin-money.

"Dr. Latimer, do you know any one who could use a hall?" said Manning. "Thirty-five hundred seats, free lights, usher service, printed tickets, everything."

"If you don't mind, it's all settled," shrilled Mrs. Jamieson, pointing a triumphant green parasol at Manning. "It was this way, Dr. Latimer. I counted upon a lot of speakers for my meeting. Well, at bottom all men are cowards. Several of them refused to participate in any attempt to put pressure on the government in favor of the Allies. And the rest said they wouldn't lift a finger to help Germany. It was too disgusting. Then the newspapers got hold of it and all my vice-presidents resigned. Next, my girls said they hadn't recovered from my last bazaar. I spent two weeks on the telephone trying to save that meeting, until Harmon—"

"Mr. Jamieson?" said Latimer.

"Exactly. Harmon insisted that I call it off and go away for a long rest. So here I am."

"I am exceedingly sorry," said Latimer.

"But I didn't give in," said the audacious lady. "Of course, I wouldn't dream of asking the Auditorium people to give me back my money, but they gave me two postponements. I spent two weeks, before I left town, trying to give the hall away; it was hopeless."

"In a city like New York, where the public is always being rallied and appealed to, it is very strange," said Latimer.

"The trouble is, it's such a *big* hall. Once I nearly got rid of it to the Community Folk-Dance Association. They kept it a week and found they had disposed of only two hundred and thirty-five tickets. So they threw it back on me. They said it was too far uptown for a Community audience."

"One might advertise," said Latimer.

"And make a show of myself? No. I was just having tea with Lucille Snedeker when the Community people wrote returning the hall. I don't know what made me tell her. Lucille had an inspiration. She said she had a young Armenian dancer who was a genius and only needed an introduction to the American public. I should have known better. Lucille is a fool. She is always picking up young geniuses in the queerest eating-

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places you can imagine. Lucille said the Armenian would need an orchestra and I agreed to pay for it. In two days it was all over. The Armenian took one look at the place and said she would never consent to make her début in such a barn. It would be a crime against her art."

"And yet," said Latimer, "the theatre of Dionysus at Athens was a sizable place."

"Things looked desperate," said Mrs. Jamieson. "For weeks after I came down here I wrote to everybody I could think of. I offered the hall to the Juvenile Delinquency Society, but they had other plans. I suggested to the Fire Department that they might use it for an exhibition drill, and they said that something in the City charter prohibited their accepting gratuities from a private person. And, Dr. Latimer, it's ridiculous the way people have gone crazy about the war. The Society for the Extension of Port Terminal Facilities wrote, thanking me for the offer, but regretting their inability to accept a favor from a person of such well-known pro-Ally sympathies. It was too disgusting. And then all at once, Margaret, I thought of something."

"Yes, dear," said the girl from her pile of wet plates.

"There is a big strike on in one of Mr. Jamieson's factories. I read about it in the papers. I wrote to the union leaders offering them the hall."

"And your husband doesn't mind?" said Latimer.

"Harmon mind? He is the most generous soul alive, and he has been so worried about me. Well, those strike people are willing to take the hall, but they insist that I pay for the newspaper advertising and the posters. They sent me a specimen notice which they expect to print. Their description of Harmon is positively shameful. But I think I'll let them have it. If this keeps up another week I shall break down."

She rose impetuously.

"I shall be horribly late for dinner. Good-by, dearest." She kissed the girl, nodded to the men, and floated out.

CHAPTER X

MANNING INSISTS

LATIMER was thinking, inconsequentially, of Mrs. Jamieson and the sick woman at Westville, when Manning's voice came to him as from afar.

"I had put a question to you when we were interrupted, Dr. Latimer. How is the war to end for God?"

"Is that what your mind has been on in the intervals of the poultry business?" asked Latimer.

"Before that," said Manning. "Of recent years He has been with me pretty constantly, and at the most inopportune times. Between editions sometimes; or when I have hung over the make-up table, trying to beat the clock. Like a draught of chill air it would come—a hollow, bitter doubt. You ask yourself suddenly how does this Final Extra Wall Street Complete relate itself to the make-up of the universe and its Maker-Up."

"You have your own answer, of course."

"The obvious one," said Manning. "The war has been a disaster for Him."

"Father," said Margaret, "do you call this drying a teacup? Take another towel and do it over."

"Yes, my dear," said Manning humbly; but it was some time before he bestirred himself in search of a fresh towel.

"Ten million dead is a bitter thing to contemplate," said Latimer. "But after all there was the Black Death six hundred years ago, when one third of Europe perished. Yet God survived."

"I am afraid you don't get me," said Manning. "Of course He survived, just as He will probably survive this war; through force of habit, through the clutch of superstition, through the law of illogic which rules the common life. But the question is, ought He to survive? How does He come out of this war when tested by the standards of reason with which He is supposed to have endowed us? I have no doubt that after the Black Plague there were men who asked the same question. Where is the answer? If ten million dead, if the agony of half the world—Oh, well, I could repeat what's been said from the beginning of things. For three years evil has had it all its own way. How shall we believe in anything else?—Where is that towel you were speaking of, Margaret? Counsel for plaintiff rests his case."

Latimer's eyes were upon Margaret. If to him, Latimer, his host's way with a great topic was somewhat free and easy, how about this young girl? But Margaret was smiling over the hot water and soap. Plainly she was hardened to Manning's vigorous methods in search of his soul.

"You've given me a difficult case to defend," said Latimer. "Under the circumstances I must follow the precedent of all good lawyers when cornered. I must resort to technicalities. I begin by questioning the validity of the indictment. I demand a poll of the grand jury. Are you unanimous?"

"Speaking for myself, I am not," said Manning. "That's the tragedy of it; even when we accuse Him, we do it with half a mind. But that is because of the prestige of the defendant. It is like a jury of plumbers and shoe-clerks indicting the head of the Railroad Trust."

"Precisely," said Latimer. "We are too ready to take it for granted that all men to-day are weighed down by the horror of war. As a matter of fact, there is no such unanimity. We have no means of knowing how many of the plain people like war. There must be a great many; those who enjoy the adventure, the release from the monotony

of daily duties, and even, I am sorry to say, those who have not outlived the primitive taste for killing.

"These are the inarticulate folk. There are the others, who like war and can give a reason: the people who think that war is necessary for righteousness; or as a tonic against race degeneration. Not to mention the professionals—the army and navy officers, who may not like war but who certainly do not condemn it. It is true that, if you made a poll of newspaper editors, you might find a great many who think that war is evil. But if you were to take a census among pastors of fashionable metropolitan churches—

"Well, then. As long as you are not unanimous in your indictment against God it is obvious that your charge lacks validity. Until you can get Russians and Germans and Frenchmen, ministers and aviators and Socialists, mothers and emperors and newspaper editors and clergymen, to agree that war is an unmitigated curse, your case falls to the ground."

"Unmitigated!" cried Manning. "That's just it. You will find very few men who will tell you that war is an unmitigated evil. Of course there are compensations. But what sort of Wisdom and

Power is it that can get results only through blood and tears? In all reverence I ask whether it isn't a Chinese way of ruling a world, to be burning it down every little while for the sake of a little roast pork. Given an unlimited expense account, with no questions asked, any one could rule this universe. Give me permission to cut up a hospital full of people, and there isn't any doubt but that I can pull off a successful operation for appendicitis now and then—with a kitchen knife. But you would hardly call me a great surgeon. Unmitigated! Of course not. It is undeniable that a millionaire paranoiac cannot squander a fortune in the Tenderloin without giving employment to a certain number of honest cooks, carpenters, and street-cleaners."

"Isn't it a question of what you choose to fix your mind on?" said Margaret.

"A very happy thought," Latimer beamed at her. "Such as is likely to come in the restful occupation of dishwashing. Do you know, Manning, considering how many women for how many years have ruminated over the dish-basin, it is a wonder that they have made such small contribution to philosophy."

"So there is no answer?" said Manning.

"Not if you demand proof of a perfect God," said Latimer. "But if it be a question of a God moving toward perfection I can speak with more confidence. And when you ask me how will He come out of this horror in Europe, I can say that He will come out fairly well. Better, by comparison, than men will come out. This much I am convinced of, that God is improving more rapidly than man."

"That is something," said Manning.

The two had given up all pretence of making themselves useful to the girl. Manning leaned against the edge of the kitchen table and bit his finger-nails, his eyes fixed on Latimer. The latter, with an unfailing instinct for making himself comfortable, had ensconced himself in the chair vacated by Mrs. Jamieson, his attention divided between Manning, Margaret, and the mass of lilac that hung down over the windows.

"Take," said he, "the heathen and his gods, and compare them with yourself and your own Master of the Universe. Then ask yourself which marks the greater advance—the distance between you and the tribesman of the Congo, or the distance between that black man's fetish and your own Creator. It is a matter only of five or ten thousand years in

the history of evolution; yet certain results present themselves.

"Now as between the Congo native and yourself," Latimer continued, "the gain forward is on the whole inconsiderable. That is, so far as human essentials are concerned. The Bantu tribesman, for instance, is as good a father as you are. In fact, I have read that among many savage races the children are much more fondly treated than, let us say, a boy in an upper-class English family. As a husband the African Negro may be a bit more overbearing and a harder taskmaster; although here too it is probable that there is less wife-beating in the Congo than there is in Whitechapel. As a member of the social organism he is much more loyal to his king than even the German peasant, much more ready to sacrifice his personal inclinations to the common good. The sense of pity is perhaps not so highly developed in primitive man; this is, to be sure, a reflex of his greater insensibility to pain; but admit that on the whole he is more cruel than you are. Admit cannibalism for instance; though cannibalism is bound up with his religion rather than with his humanity. And there you are. By these values, then, which we use to appraise a man to-day,—not by his accomplish-

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ments but by his primal qualities as husband, father, citizen, comrade, warrior, athlete, and all-round good fellow,—the Congo aborigine is not very far removed from you. It is with reluctance that I quote Mr. Kipling on anything concerned with real human values, but after all, 'You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din.' "

"Conceded," said Manning.

"But take now the God of the Congolese, of the Bushman, the Huron, the Blackfellow of Australia. He is a God of cruelty, lust, and deceit. He rules entirely by fear. He makes life for his votaries an unceasing round of panic and placatory sacrifice. He demands the roasted flesh of enemies, the sacrifice of children, the immolation of virgins, the mutilation of one's own body. He is not even fashioned by man after his own image; for whereas the Negro is on the whole a well-built, upstanding, clean-skinned biped, his god is a monstrosity, with no head or three heads, no feet or ten feet, a nightmare, an abortion.

"Well, then, man for man and god for god, as between you and the native of the Congo, who has made the greater progress in the course of ten thousand years, man or God?"

"Cleverly put," said Manning.

"Soundly put!" shouted Latimer. "My dear fellow,—" here he got up from his chair and seized the other by the lapel of his shabby jacket,—"my dear Manning, the further back you carry the investigation, the stronger is the showing for a God moving on to higher things. When you spoke of inefficient management in the universe you were thinking of evolution, weren't you? Jacques Loeb speaks of one of those obscure deep-sea creatures with which I will not pretend to have even a bowing acquaintance. Well, of a potential 100,000,000 offspring of, let us call it, *Medusa hypothetica*, Loeb estimates that 10,000 survive, one one-hundredth of one per cent. That is what you were thinking of, 99 99/100 per cent of waste. You were thinking of war, cancer, tuberculosis, plague, and starvation wages. You were thinking that the God who lets the spawn of the deep seas go down to destruction lets the spawn of human kind go down into senseless destruction."

"I was," said Manning.

"But have you marked the improvement? Of ten thousand eggs of *Medusa Hypothetica*, one survives. Of ten thousand children born, even in unsanitary and underfed India, probably seven thousand survive. An improvement of 700,000 per cent

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in the evolution from fish to man. It is something."

"Something, yes," Manning agreed.

"It is much," said Latimer. "And it gives you your answer. How will God come out of this war? Judging by precedent, He will emerge with fair credit. Certainly in much better shape than the German General Staff. If the war shall mark a step forward in evolution, then it is probable that God has moved further forward than man. If the war is a step backward, He has probably fallen back far less than man. The proportion is always in his favor. He is the van and the rear-guard."

"We can go back to the dining-room," said Margaret.

CHAPTER XI

INTERLUDE

"Go to, now," the indignant reader will have been saying to himself this many a page; "what sort of romance of the open road is this which has been wandering up and down the countryside for two days and has not yet encountered a philosophic tinker—with or without a female companion—eating fried bacon from the point of a clasp-knife?"

Let the outspoken reader be patient only a few minutes longer, and the fault shall be more than remedied.

CHAPTER XII

IDYLL IN A GARAGE

LATIMER rose the next morning some time after dim sounds in the kitchen and the outhouses intimated that the girl and her father were astir. But when he was dressed and downstairs, it was still early enough to fall in with Manning's suggestion of a sheltered cove in the river just below the house, where one might bathe with comfort if one overlooked the sharp-edged stones on the bottom. Latimer acquiesced all the more readily because his sleep had not been of the best. Part of the night he had been reviewing, wide-eyed, a painful number of flaws in his discourse with Manning. By changing his pillow to the foot of the bed and back again, he succeeded in going to sleep; but it was ill resting on the platform of the Auditorium and trying to make your voice carry its message of an Ultimate Purpose over the blare of a full-sized union orchestra under Mrs. Jamieson's direction. It was the sight of his heavy-eyed guest that caused Manning to suggest the swimming-hole.

The sky was overcast, with a threat of rain. As Latimer made his way to the river, he was more than ever conscious of several points in Manning's argument that called for a more explicit reply. But with the first shiver of his body to the chill of the mountain stream the world began to adjust itself, and as he splashed out vigorously the sun broke through the clouds. At the swing of that familiar baton, the non-union orchestra in the tree-tops struck up in full strength, the surface of the stream fell into a shimmering Oriental dance, and Manning's objections were revealed in all their flimsy nakedness.

"Why are not all of us sun-worshippers?" said Latimer, as he threw the tingling cool of the water into his face from the hollowed cup of his upturned palms. "The reason may be—Oh!" He had stepped with his full weight on a sharp flint and he jerked his foot out of the water prepared for the necessity of cotton and peroxide. With relief he found that the skin was not broken. Still, that might be a reason why people did not universally pray to the sun from a pebbly bottom. His clear eye at breakfast delighted his host.

The sky was gloomy once more when he shouldered his knapsack. Manning's caution that it

would surely rain before noon he dismissed as unworthy of a man and a tried pedestrian. Would he come again, soon, by Sunday, perhaps? They might then go up to the Big House, inhabited, as Margaret had told him, by so many queer people. It would be worth Latimer's while, insisted Manning; but he was thinking really of himself. He had not exhausted his visitor.

"I will come back," said Latimer, and shook hands with Manning. He took Margaret's hands between his own and held them for some time. "Thank you very much, Margaret," he said.

"For what, Dr. Latimer?" she asked.

He blushed, stammered slightly, and saved himself.

"For the color of your eyes, my dear."

At the gate he turned back.

"What would it cost to put a self-starter into that automobile of yours?" he asked.

Manning looked at him in surprise.

"Why, there's one coming down next week," he said. "You see, I've sold a piece to the *Poultry Grower's Journal* on 'Mobilizing the Incubator,'—And Latimer!"

"Yes?"

"Last night, it took me a good while to fall

asleep." Manning paused, frowned, and burst out: "What will happen to America?"

"Oh, we'll win the war. How can you doubt it on a morning like this?"

"I'm not worrying about the war," said Manning. "That part of it is all right. What I kept asking myself last night is, Ought we to win the war? What shape has the war found us in? How will it leave us?"

"And do you know now?"

"If I knew everything, Latimer, I wouldn't be playing nurse-girl to a lot of debutante chickens. I'd be writing editorials for the *New Republic*. But here is the point: How about the Melting Pot?"

"You've been delving into the subject, and I haven't," said Latimer, still unable to get into the proper mood. "What have you found out?"

"The Melting Pot is a farce," said Manning. "It is crying out for the junkman. We are not a nation, Latimer. We're a Benevolent and Protective Order of all the fauna in the zoo; so long as the assessment rate doesn't get too high. Then we sit up on our hind legs and howl."

"Like good democrats," said Latimer. "It is a subject that will stand examination. Good-by."

It was his intention to head back for Williamsport and Harriet. This might be done, without retracing one's route, by striking out across the hills and turning north along the eastern slope. It was a much easier climb than the road out of Williamsport. Less than an hour brought him to the summit, and then it was a steady drop through cornfields and meadows criss-crossed with trickling water by which the cattle were feeding—the beautiful eugenic herds that ministered to the high butter-fat standards of the great city. The clouds were low; it would rain before nightfall, but not long before that. Surely there was time for the snatch of sleep under the trees, which his growing drowsiness demanded; it was habit reinforced by the reaction from his morning bath.

He stretched out by a broad shallow of granite-paved water and opened *Quentin Durward*. From the other side a contemplative Jersey watched and gave approval. That gentle, sympathetic gaze took him from Walter Scott and lust for sleep. He put away the book, pillowed his head on his right arm, and grew absorbed in his neighbor.

"I trust," Latimer found himself addressing the cow, though his lips did not move, "that you will not think me unjust to my good friend Manning,

if I find my mind working more composedly in your presence. This is intended neither as a reflection upon Manning nor as flattery to you. It is simply a question of atmosphere."

The cow raised her head, studied her visitor intently without committing herself to any definite opinion, and made a half turn to the left where the grass stood high. She thus gave Latimer her profile.

"For the gist of the matter is this," said Latimer. "In all discourse between man and man the spirit of controversy intrudes upon and injures the spirit of truth. What people call persuasion is only a mutual sacrifice of the truth for the sake of harmony. But ye and I, oh cow, by refraining from all exchange of thought, remain each true to his or her own course. We stimulate each other, but we do not impose ourselves on each other. There is no compromise. Either you have the whole truth or I. There is no *modus vivendi* with the truth."

The cow made another half turn to the left, putting Latimer entirely out of her view, and went on with her meal. Her tail switched to the right and left in sharp little jerks, like a symphony conductor's baton in the Scherzo.

"No doubt you will ask," said Latimer, "why

thought should ever be pursued in the presence of a second party. You might cite the case of great religions which have been formulated in the desert, and scientific truths which have been run down in the solitude of college laboratories. But I doubt whether there has ever been a truly perfect solitude. An ant, a nesting bird, a snake across the rocks, intrudes upon the vision of the anchorite and supplies the incentive, the model for thought. That is just it. The silent artist model is what we need, present but unobtrusive."

The cow turned full face, studied Latimer for a moment, and swung gently forward into the shallow stream as if with the intention of entering into closer communion. But half way across she stopped to drink; which having accomplished she returned to her own side of the stream, knelt, and observed him dispassionately.

"That is as it should be," said Latimer. "I want you near enough to make me aware of a non-Ego, without being compelled to take you into account."

He picked up *Quentin Durward* and fell asleep.

A wet puff of wind roused him and brought him to his feet. There was thunder in the near distance, and the clouds were sweeping up from the

west at a rate that made it a problem of minutes for Latimer to find shelter. It would not be a difficult matter in this thick-studded farmland. Only it was not a farmhouse that offered itself first, but an ancient barn now converted to the uses of a public garage.

"May I turn in until the storm is over?" asked Latimer of one in besmeared overalls who sat tilting back against the wall just inside the double doors of the barn and dozed, apparently.

The proprietor looked up at Latimer out of a pair of very light blue eyes that were not at all heavy with sleep, massaged his chin with thumb and index finger, looked out over his shoulder at the mad drive of the clouds, spit judiciously, and said, "I reckon you better."

He indicated a chair on the other side of the doorway.

"It will keep up some time when it comes," said Latimer, turning his chair so as to command through the doorway the massed darkness piling in from the west, the hill-tops already lost in the mist, and the sudden little tremor of the leaves in the anxious hush before the downpour.

"You can't always tell," said the other, with complete lack of conviction.

Latimer stared.

"I hope you won't take it as a personal animadversion," he said, "but the non-committal nature of your reply makes me wonder once more at the seeming inability of country folk to make a definite statement. Why, for instance, is it that no farmer will ever tell you how many miles it is to anywhere? Unlike us of the city, you who travel in buggy or haywagon are not occupied with your newspaper or conversation when in transit. When your eyes are not fixed on a spot somewhere between the horse's ears, you must be looking at the road. You know its every turn and stretch. Why, then?"

The garage-master's cigar went from one corner of the mouth to the other by a single dento-labial manœuvre that would have delighted a philologist.

"It don't make the least difference to people out here," he said, "if it's five miles or ten. Out here we hitch up in time so as to get back in time; that's all. Miles is an artificial thing."

"You're a philosopher?"

"Wagons and general repair work was my line. Now it's mostly automobiles. The only people who are interested in miles are those who can afford to go anywhere at any time. They pull up here



"May I turn in until the storm is over."

and ask how far to Kingston. You tell 'em and they say, 'That's a hundred and fifty miles since breakfast.' Now those hundred and fifty miles might be anywhere, I reckon."

"True," said Latimer.

From beyond the hills the growl of thunder came rolling up and broke in a great crash overhead. The face of the earth was rigid with suspense.

"'Gas, 28 cents,'" ruminated Latimer, studying the signs before the door. "Gas, I presume, is gasoline. But what do you mean by Free Air?"

The garage-master looked at him in wonder.

"For the tires," he said.

"But that is the same air we breathe."

The other grinned.

"Ever try to fill a 36-inch tube by hand?"

"The cost of inflation, to be sure!" cried Latimer. "I am a novice in motor-science. Strange, though! One may now say as free as the air on condition only that one buys something with the air, like gas at 28 cents. It is one disadvantage under which the rich suffer as compared with the poor. These do have their air free." The first drops fell cool on his face. "It looks as if you might be compelled to shut up shop for the afternoon."

The proprietor got up and stood in the doorway, his cigar drooping heavy with thought.

"Well, I don't know. They come by in all weather. Some of them like the splash of the mud."

"And seeing them come and go raises no desire to be up with them and out into the world?"

The other grinned.

"Seein' the world costs, even if the air be free." He searched his pockets for a match and, finding none, was just as content. "I guess you see just as much by staying here and havin' the world come to you. There'll be sometimes a dozen cars stoppin' in the course of a day. That's fifty people you see, face to face. You ain't likely to see that many if you climbed into a car yourself and went out inspectin' the world."

"Only here you see them under the same limited aspect," Latimer insisted. "Either they want gas or oil or free air."

"Yep," said the owner. "And when you've done a thousand miles in your machine, you've met about a dozen men who sell gas or air or chicken dinners." Once more he searched for matches and fell back into baffled resignation. "Don't you think they'd get tired going through the same game

on their holidays they do all the rest of the year at home?"

"What game?" said Latimer.

"The man in front drives like mad all day, and the ladies sit still and look at the scenery. Man at the wheel has no time for that. When they stop for the night, he's too tired for conversation."

(Now by this time it must be obvious to the discerning reader that for some pages back he has been in the presence of a philosophic tinker. As for the bacon, that is to come immediately.)

CHAPTER XIII

THE TINKERS' CHORUS

WITHOUT warning the show began. A zigzag of violet flame shot down into the grove across the road, signaling the last desperate bombardment before the charge. While their ear-drums were still aching with the fury of the thunder salvos, the rain came down in a sweeping barrage, the yellow dust in the road had turned to steaming chocolate, and the wagon-ruts were overflowing gulleys.

The men rose to draw their chairs out of the swirl of the storm, but the owner did not resume his seat. He stood in the doorway and listened.

"Had dinner?" he said.

It was a loosening of the flood-gates. Latimer was instantly assailed by the swirling tides of famine. He dived into his knapsack.

"I have with me an ample provision of hard-boiled eggs," he said. "Also fruit, chocolate cake, soda crackers, salt and pepper." It was Margaret who had thought of the salt and pepper at the

last moment. "I should be happy to have you share with me."

From a cupboard the other man brought forth bread, a sizeable tin pail, and a basin containing eggs. At sight of the pail Latimer straightened on his chair.

"Not bacon?" he said.

His host nodded. "You'd better save your provisions for supper, if you prefer this."

"Oh!" said Latimer.

On an empty packing-case in one corner the proprietor placed a small kerosene stove, and on that a skillet. Latimer laid out his share of the feast, bustling about in the divine aroma from the frying-pan. He brought up the two chairs from the doorway, while his host began breaking eggs into the pan. Suddenly the latter stopped, listened, and moved to the door.

"Car coming," he said. "Big machine." And he cleared a pathway from the door to the rear of the barn.

"You expect them to turn in?"

"They better," said the proprietor.

The heavy mustard-colored car ran past the garage, slackened, slipped, stopped and began churning its way back. The driver had caught

sight of shelter too late. He now manœuvered his retreat so deftly as to evoke a glance of expert approval from the judicial garage-master. In spite of the protection of top, side-curtains, and windshield, the three men who emerged from the car were, two of them, in damp discomfort, and the driver wet to the skin.

Thomas Carlyle thought that, if you were to strip a roomful of people of their clothes, the essential democracy of man would be demonstrated. But an easier way, and more in harmony with the requirements of modern decorum, would be to put a number of men into motor-dusters; and if such coats should be sodden with rain, the semblance of human equality would be complete. At first Latimer saw only three men in soggy apparel and uniform ill-temper. That the driver was the owner of the magnificent car was apparent only from the easy manner in which he turned over the machine to the garage-master, with a few curt words of direction.

"One of our rulers," thought Latimer, embracing in one swift glance of appraisal the tall, trim-shouldered figure, the iron-gray hair, the clean-modeled nose and chin, the close-clipped moustache, which, set above a thin-carved mouth, is the dis-

tinguishing mark of our best American physiognomy. He looked ownership; not offensively so, but immediately, unquestionably authentic.

Of his companions Latimer decided that the short, pudgy, bald-headed gentleman with a professional beard was of Teuton origin. The third stranger was native again; a man under forty, of the fairly ordinary type which the magazines usually describe as keen and aggressive.

The owner of the car and the keen-faced young man gave one glance at Latimer, and one at the frying-pan, and then turned away to perform their share of a tourist's duty in a garage, which consists in looking on as intensely as may be while the mechanic is at work. But the third member of the party threw his coat and hat into the tonneau and revealed himself to Latimer in a flash as a lovable human creature.

"Pacon!" he shouted, thrusting his nose much closer to the delectable dish than good manners, not to say safety, permitted. "And we have breakfasted at seven o'clock. What a breakfast! Half-cooked ham gulped down to the detriment of the indestinal secretions! And the coffee—my Gott!"

"You are heartily welcome to what you see," said Latimer.

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"You are not a guest here?"

"I am, but likewise half-owner of what is on the table."

"Yes, but for five strong men, of whom three have breakfasted at seven o'clock; and such a breakfast!"

"There is more in our host's tin pail, and I can vouch for his kindness," said Latimer.

The bald-headed famine victim sank into a chair with a vast sigh of felicity. "The meganism of an automobile is something that has never interested me," he said; and with two slices of bread he dredged a sliver of bacon from the pan. One slice of bread with the bacon went to its destiny, the other came back and scooped up a magnificent portion of egg and gravy.

"Life has its atvendures," he said, as soon as the facilities offered; "but also it has its combensations." He searched the barn for Latimer's car. "You are embarked upon a pedestrian tour?"

"Rather late in life," said Latimer, "I have succumbed to the lure of the out-of-doors. My name is Latimer. I'm from the city."

"I too; Hartmann is the name. And you find it not disappointing?"

"The contrary—delightful; only not altogether in consonance with the classic model."

"Not quite Cheorche Porrow, hey? The wind on the heath, the tends of the Romany Rye? Gasoline fumes rather?"

"Quite so. But, on the other hand, some of the essentials persist. For instance—" and Latimer indicated the frying-pan. "If you will allow a kerosene stove for a fire of dry twigs, we are by the road, virtually in the open, on the edge of a wood, the storm in our ears—now what else does it need to fill up the picture?"

Hartmann paused with two slabs of bread suspended over the skillet like one of the witches in *Macbeth*, I, 1. He stared a moment, then shouted,—

"A dinker! Don't say you have found a dinker, with a little din stove and bellows—and a tonkey?"

"A tinker precisely, though without the accessories you specify. Our friend there." And Latimer pointed to the garage smith, at that moment peering under the lifted hood of the car. "Modernized, to be sure, but genuine enough in the possession of the one quality which makes tinkers what they are?"

"Bacon, you mean?"

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"Well, then, I should have said, two faculties: bacon, of which you have already tasted; and homely wisdom, of which I had a goodly portion before you came, and to the quality of which I can testify."

Hartmann clutched at his unanointed bread slices with the joy of a great illumination.

"But, my Gott, I am sdupid! For two weeks I have been traveling with the greatest of them all, the greatest in America, and I have not known it."

Latimer was puzzled. "We were speaking of tinkers."

"Brecisely. You have heard of him." He nodded toward the owner of the car. "Foreman—Cornelius J. Foreman of the International Can and Car Company. He began, you will remember, by soldering tin cans for the preserved vechetable trade. Since then he has picked up side lines—tin-plate, steel rails, beams, automobile parts, ships, munitions."

"When a man of business reaches that stage," said Latimer, "it is my impression that his interest is no longer in producing real things but in financing them. Strictly speaking, Mr. Foreman is not a tinker but a capitalist."

"Even so," replied Hartmann. "In other

words, the highest tevelopment of the dinker's trade. He patches up leaky corporations. He polishes up darnished credit. He organizes, reorganizes, gonsolidates, absorbs—as I said, a dinker."

"And the young man?" said Latimer.

"That's my good friend Hamlin Filbert, efficiency expert."

The automobile had now received all the supervisory attention it needed. Foreman and the young man with the executive eye walked to the door, took just one sufficient glance to show that they were weatherbound for some time, and turned to the packing-case table, where room was somehow found for them. The garage-owner put down his oil-can and turned cook. Hartmann pondered the moral problem whether he was entitled to a share in the new supply of eggs which the host brought forth from the cupboard and was now assimilating with fresh bacon into a heavenly mess. From this reverie he tore himself to make the required introductions, with special emphasis on his own happy conceit of Cornelius J. Foreman, Tinker.

"Fine," said Foreman. "Now tell Mr. Latimer something about yourself."

But Hartmann suddenly became tongue-tied with shyness, and Foreman expounded.

"Dr. Hartmann has kindly consented to collaborate with me in a project I have now under way."

"It's dis way," cried Hartmann, in a desperate attempt to shift the focus of interest from himself.

"Fifty miles from here, in the Bennsylvania hills, Mr. Foreman has a big plant which before the war used to produce more salmon dins and fruit-jar covers than the compined outbut of—what shall I say?—Tenmark and Sweden?"

"You might throw in Spain and Guatemala," said Foreman.

"To-day it produces munitions," said Hartmann. "And we are rebuilding Fairview into a model town. Mr. Foreman was always inderested in his workers. But undil recently the broject involved very serious financial considerations. Fortunately, the war"—

He stopped short, fearing that his narrative was verging on satire, but Foreman calmly went on with his meal.

"Fire ahead; you're doing fine," he said.

"The asdounding brosperty the country is now enjoying," said Hartmann, "has brought the great plan to fruition. We are building. Our present mission is a final survey of the water-subbly."

For Latimer the first pleasing vision of a com-

fortably housed and safeguarded factory population was spoiled by the presence of the keen-faced efficiency expert. He saw the new Fairview, with its sanitary homes,—no doubt in the sixteenth-century English village architecture,—its community hall, its open-air swimming-pool probably, and about the heart he felt the cramp of formula from which he was fleeing.

"Tell me this," he said: "does your plan provide freedom for your workers as well as health and recreation?"

For the first time Filbert spoke up.

"A healthy man is a free man. Seventy-eight per cent of dependency among the poor is directly due to illness."

"I read only the other day of an efficiency specialist," said Latimer quite inconsequentially. "He found out that the middle-aged women stenographers were being paid according to their years of service, although they averaged three words to the minute less than the girls a year out from business school. He therefore readjusted the salary schedule on a words-to-the-minute basis. For that may a patient God take pity on his soul!"

The next moment he was racked with shame.

"Every profession has its muckers," said Filbert quietly. "We shall ultimately live down ours."

"Mr. Filbert has not been taking the bread out of the mouths of my employees," said Foreman. "He has helped me increase wages twenty-five per cent in the last two years."

"And output?" said Latimer.

"Thirty-five per cent," replied Foreman. "And when Dr. Hartmann gets through with Fairview, wages and output will be still higher."

"Dr. Hartmann?" said Latimer; and Foreman showed his surprise.

"I imagined you had identified him before this," he said. "Hartmann is the T.B. specialist at the New Medical College, and head of the East Side Hospital for Industrial Disease."

"In other words," said Hartmann, who squirmed and blushed under the scrutiny directed toward him, "another dinker. That makes three."

"How three?" said Foreman.

"There is our friend the blacksmith over there," said Hartmann, "and you, and myself, whose specialty is patching up human bots and kettles. That makes three. No, by Gott, four, four! My friend Filbert will not object to choining the class

as a dinkerer of nerve-energy and muscular fatigue. What?"

Filbert accepted the badge with a grin.

"Hartmann's tinkering being the hardest of all," said Foreman, with obvious affection for the man.

"No; not at all the hardest," cried Hartmann. "The simblest. Yes. I work with the simblest tools. You have a thousand machines in your blants, Foreman. You have a most imbressive collection of hammers, saws, files, wrenches, bits, chacks, pumps, oilers, what not. But you need them all. I, too make a great show of machinery. My office is glittered up with X-ray machines and arterial gauges. But that is pluff. My real tools are three."

"Yes?" said Latimer.

"Eggs, milk, and air," said Hartmann.

"Fortunately the latter comes free, save for the well-to-do," said Latimer, pointing to the sign outside.

Hartmann's face darkened.

"Dat is the devil of it all," he cried. "My friend Foreman, when he buys his gasoline and oil, gets his air free; but my batients on the East Side, when they buy milk and eggs, have yet to buy their air, and it is the most expensive of the three. In

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fact"—and here Hartmann was full charge on his hobby—"give me enough free air and I want liddle else. I want windows in every room, so that I can build sleeping dents. It's a simble matter. You arrange the awning so that the patient's body is all inside the room and only the head brotrudes. But I must have windows—hundreds, tousands, dens of tousands of them."

"You'll have them in Fairview," said Foreman. Hartmann's eyes shone.

"Fairview will be all windows, with shust enough building material to frame them." Then, suddenly and in the happiness of his heart, "Mr. Latimer," he cried, "why don't you choin this merry dinker's party? Come with us to Fairview!"

"We'd be delighted," said Foreman.

"Perhaps I might qualify," said Latimer wistfully. "I, too, in my time, when I was in active service on the campus, did some tinkering with the minds and souls of young men."

"Bravo!" shouted Hartmann. "It beats Che-orche Porrow! Five jolly dinkers!"

"I will come gladly," said Latimer. "Only tell me this, Hartmann. The common man upon whom we have been practicing our trade—after this war,

will he consent to being tinkered with as before? Or will he insist on a larger share in mending his own pots and kettles?"

"You mean—" said Hartmann.

"Just this," said Latimer. "Here is a great mass of raw and half-shaped material which we may call the common life, and here are the four of us whose business it has been to tinker with this raw material in our several lines; to whom you might add many others—the military tinker, the ecclesiastical tinker, the æsthetic tinker, and the rest, and every one of us pretty well convinced that we were the people, and that the common man could not possibly get on without us—without my educational formula, or your milk-and-egg formula, or Mr. Foreman's buying and selling formula, or Mr. Filbert's fatigue curves. How does the war affect our pretensions? What chance do we stand after peace is signed?"

"Something, but not very much," said Foreman cheerfully. "The war has shown us all up."

"There will always be need for leadership," objected Filbert.

"Leadership," laughed Foreman. "A joke, and after the war we will admit it. You don't agree, Mr. Latimer?"

"I don't agree, but I am surprised. Surely, if any one is entitled to believe in exceptional gifts and exceptional services, it is you—a hackneyed phrase, but after all, a Captain of Industry."

Foreman grinned.

"Call it accident, Mr. Latimer, and you will about hit it. I'm not a leader. I am a lucky bit of driftwood bobbing along on the crest of a great wave which you have called the common life; the common life of a people of one hundred millions. It's luck. Just as good men as I have failed. If Foreman hadn't organized the International Can and Car, a fellow named Jones would have done it. After all, the people must have their canned salmon and barbed wire. The war has found us out, I tell you. Leadership! Organization! Bunk! The war would have petered out long ago if half a billion people hadn't revealed unsuspected capacities for going without food. That's what our leadership has amounted to."

"Without leadership Germany would have collapsed two years ago," said Filbert.

"Without leadership Chermany might now be in a bosition to look a tecent man in the eye!" cried Hartmann. "Even if it is my father's country

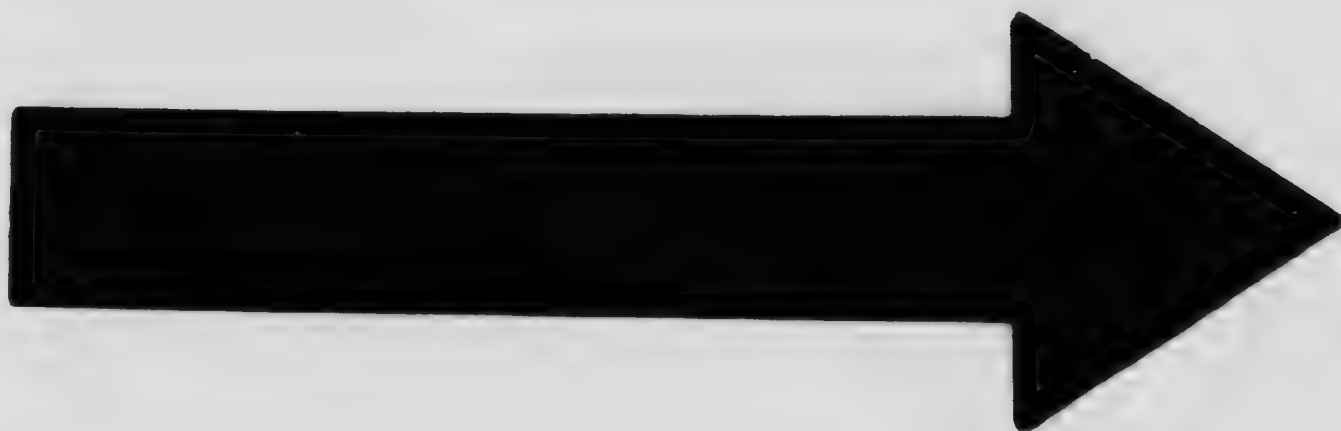
which he left two chumps ahead of the drill-sergeant. Chermany! The most thoroughly dinkered nation in history, and its soul has gone to the devil."

"No, there I refuse to follow you," said Latimer, leaning forward to put a hand on Hartmann's shoulder. "It is precisely my point that, in spite of its tinkers, the soul of the German people has not been sold to the ancient enemy: it beats somewhere, blinded, wounded, with the current of life in it. Just as my boys at college managed to grow into life in spite of us on the faculty. Just as Hartmann's patients frequently get well—I beg your pardon."

"But it is quite right," shouted Hartmann. "Eggs, milk, air, and let dem alone!"

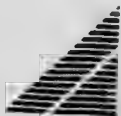
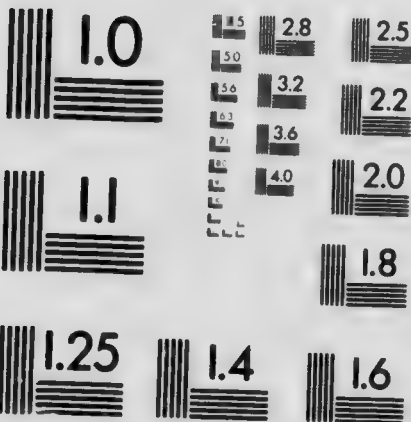
"Even before the war, it seems to me that we were turning away from the magic of formula to the simplicities of the common life," said Latimer. "It has been away from pills and drugs to eggs, milk, and air. Away from gerund-grinding and trigonometrical gymnastics to—free air. Away from ecclesiasticism toward—well, let us say, free air. And so in the factories and the mines—though a little."

"We'll get there yet," said Foreman.



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"Will you run your factories after the war under orders from the I.W.W.?" said Filbert.

"I've fought them and I imagine I can get on with them," said Foreman.

Latimer's face glowed.

"So that, in spite of the war, in spite of the pain and the loss, you think the common life will run on after the war? And freer, richer, perhaps?"

"I think so," said Foreman gravely.

"It is a happy thought," said Latimer almost to himself. He walked to the door and looked at the sky. "There is no sign of letting up."

"Do you play augtion?" shouted Hartmann.

"Occasionally and badly," said Latimer; and in the course of the next hour and a half he proved the absolute truth of the second part of his statement. Then the sun came out.

CHAPTER XIV

IN THE CRUCIBLE

THEY made Fairview after dark, partly because of a blow-out which spoiled for them the glory of the setting sun behind hills of hemlock and birch, and partly because the roads would not dry fast enough to let Foreman exploit his twelve cylinders to the limit. After two attempts at letting her out, one resulting in the aforesaid blow-out and the other in a swerve toward the ditch, which caused Latimer to turn pale and brace himself in his seat, Foreman turned the wheel over to Filbert with a shake of disgust, and sulked in contemplation over the speedometer the rest of the way.

Politely disregarding that gloomy protest by his side, Filbert held the car down to a safe twenty-five miles an hour, and took the curves without timidity but without bluster.

They crossed a wooden bridge and ran swiftly over the railway tracks, through the reedy flats out of which the massed chimneys of the International Can and Car shot up into the dark, mercifully

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softened from their indescribable noon-day ugliness. It was another ten minutes up grade to their destination, the home of one of the International's resident managers, as Hartmann explained, who was also the boyhood friend of the president of the company when Fairview was a small mill town and Foreman delivered grocer's parcels after school hours. The party was to dine with the Bauers, and Latimer made little difficulty in acquiescing with Hartmann's argument that one more guest would not matter.

Ten minutes were enough to reveal Fairview as a community living in the state of double transition which is so common in our older industrial towns. It was like the strata of civilization which Latimer's favorite Babylonian excavators are so fond of digging up, only that the epochs were twenty years instead of twenty centuries apart. Latimer caught traces of primitive Fairview in the decayed sheds and homes along the creek over which they entered the town, the shingled post-office, the open doors of a smithy which gave a glimpse of wagon-litter, of men with hands in their pockets conversing to the rhythm of plug cut, and children, overflowing from the smithy to the sidewalk and into the roadway. Most authentic sur-



They crossed a wooden bridge

vival of all was the row of elms and locusts which arched the road and rose to the crest of the hill, with a promise of mystery.

That was old Fairview. Along the side streets Latimer saw flashes of a newer and infinitely depressing Fairview, born out of the smoke and ashes belching from the chimneys on the flats. An alien people had inundated these former lanes of Pennsylvania-German cleanliness and turned them into alleys of congestion. The old houses were now tenements. The old gardens, outlined by bleak survivals of white wooden palings, were now a framework for hideous lines of intimate family garb, for discarded household goods, for the elementary domestic functions which the old American reticence had kept primly behind low-drawn shades and closed shutters. It reminded Latimer of an overgrown boy breaking out of his clothes—this blur of heads protruding from windows in neighborly and resonant conversation, of open doors giving vistas into the interior of kitchens, of mothers nursing their young on the porch-steps, and of children swarming everywhere.

Between these old homes of an aboriginal population and the hundreds of ugly frame barracks that flanked them and outnumbered them, there

may have been a difference of thirty years in age, but new and old were in the same stage of grime. This was the industrial town, which had sprung up around the factory chimneys without order and without care on the part of the International stockholders and managers.

"There," said Hartmann, slapping Latimer on the shoulder and waving promiscuously in the dark.

They were now half a mile, perhaps, above the meadows. Latimer peered into the night and saw the vague forms of strange creatures which were derricks, stone-crushers, road-rollers. The pale geometrical lines and curves were the avenues and crescents and terraces of the newest Fairview. He caught the glint of timber scaffoldings, and here and there the ghostly white face of a mortar-bed; squat forms which were brick piles; and shadowy rows of angles, gables, curves, which he judged to be the completed homes of the Fairview in the making.

"We have thirty houses ready," said Hartmann. "The nearest of them is well up above the fog from the meadows. To-morrow you will see."

To the left, through the side streets, Latimer had a glimpse of electric globes which dimmed the

quiet illumination of their own tree-shaded road and plainly outlined the principal commercial street of Fairview, running parallel with them. At every intersection streams of light ran down the side streets toward them from Fairview's Great White Way. He heard the clang of a trolley-car, the noise of motors, the hum of a community's conversation *en promenade*. Under the arc lights he caught glimpses of the gigantic colored posters which are the mural art of the movie age.

Supper at the Bauers' was not a prolonged affair, inasmuch as Foreman had much business to cram into his two days' stay in Fairview. Seven persons sat down to table—our own party of four, their hosts, and a young lieutenant son in khaki, on a short furlough from the cantonment, where he was imparting to the recruits of the national army the very fresh stock of military technique that he had acquired in three months at Plattsburg.

In the talk between Foreman and his boyhood friend, now one of perhaps a half hundred subordinates of the same rank in the employ of the International Can and Car, Latimer was pleased to find a happy absence either of condescension or of that forced amenity which would have amounted to exactly the same thing. Foreman was plainly liv-

ing up to his creed of luck as the foundation of his own prosperity. A turn of the wheel the other way, and Bauer might have been president of the International and Foreman one of his useful assistants. Of Bauer's attitude one had to judge by manner rather than by words, since it was obvious from the first that the conversation would be entirely dominated by the future field-marshal. Mrs. Bauer was a simple and silent house-mother.

It was inevitable that Latimer should inquire after the progress made in the training of America's new armies.

"We'll hand the Kaiser his, all right," said the Second Lieutenant, O.R.C., "but it won't be the fault of the people who planned and built the camps."

"What's the matter with the gamps? Health arrangements all right, ain't they?" sputtered Hartmann, partly with indignation, and partly because of a heavy spoonful of rice pudding.

"You couldn't kill our fellows if you tried," said the second lieutenant. "But what our specialists don't know about ventilation and drainage is quite a little bit. You should hear Major Corbin tell about the way they do things in France. I'll have some more of the pudding, dad."

"Do you always get three helpings in camp?" asked Mr. Bauer.

"The boy has had very little, William," said Mrs. Bauer.

"And the spirit of our young men?" said Latimer.

"Nothing like it in history," said the lieutenant.

"At least, not since Napoleon's first campaigns, says Major Corbin. When we once start, good night!"

"But that is splendid!" cried Latimer. Rather curtly he waved aside the girl at his elbow who was offering him coffee, and almost immediately, "I'm sorry," he said and looked up at her and wondered. He judged her normally a hearty, fresh-colored young woman obviously of Slav origin; but now she went about her work as if in a daze, he thought, and there were blue rings around her eyes. Then to the young officer, "And how long will the war last?" he said.

"Till June, 1919," said young Bauer. "Germany's reserves will hold out until then."

"You don't think financial pressure might force her to make peace before then?" said Foreman.

"Not in the least. It's all a matter of paper money. Major Corbin says it's all rot about bankruptcy and war."

Such other doubts concerning the issues and contingencies involved in the war as may have troubled any one at the table, were speedily allayed by young Bauer with the help of Major Corbin, before he excused himself on the plea that he must return to camp next morning, and with his mother retired for a final review of problems of the wardrobe.

The other men remained with their cigars, while the maid, after the simple standards of the Bauer household, busied herself with clearing the table. Once more Latimer caught the unhappy look in her eyes, and his gaze in turn did not escape the attention of Bauer.

"The poor girl has been crying," he said when she had left the room. "She heard from home this afternoon."

"Home?" queried Latimer.

"Somewhere in Galician Poland," said Bauer. "There were three brothers and a mother. Two have been killed; the youngest is in hospital. And the mother is a refugee. I wonder"—to Foreman—"if the people at Washington might help us trace her."

"Wire to Golding," said Foreman.

Business matters carried off Foreman and Hartmann for the rest of the evening, and Latimer

gratefully accepted Filbert's offer of his company for a stroll through town. At his own request they made their way down-hill toward the grim alleys of which he had caught just an impression. It was some time after the supper-hour in Fairview. The doorsteps and porches showed groups of bare-armed and collarless men gossiping from between lips tightly wrapped round the stem of corncocks. Among the elder people the segregation of the sexes was strictly observed, and there were separate groups of women, in the front yards and on the kitchen-steps, each the centre of bands of infant skirmishers who flooded over the sidewalks and into the shadows. They should have been in bed an hour ago, thought Latimer, disapproving; but he rejoiced in the vitality of their shrill voices.

"I beg your pardon," he said quickly and stopped short, peering down straight at his feet. He had nearly fallen over a youth of perhaps three years, sex not stated, who, in the middle of the road, was calmly planted in a child's-size arm-chair. Whereupon the young native rose, with the chair permanently affixed behind, trotted off, and resumed his contemplation on another section of the pavement.

Latimer was discovering in Fairview a new

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world which he might have studied any day in New York City, if chance had brought him into the proper quarters for observation. But that is always the case with foreign travel.

And then, suddenly, Latimer felt depression settling down on him. Probably it was mere physical weariness, but an ache seized upon his heart.

"Where is all this to end, Filbert?" he said. "Is this life?"

"I was thinking," said Filbert quietly, "of the settlers in the Ohio bottoms about the year 1800. Have you ever read Henry Adams's first chapter?"

"Pioneers?" said Latimer, embracing Fairview in one sweep of the arm.

"I like to believe so," said Filbert.

Latimer put his arm over the other man's shoulder.

"I want you to forgive me, Filbert."

"For what?"

"For that brutal remark of mine about the efficiency expert and the stenographers."

Filbert laughed.

"Dr. Latimer, I never gave it a thought and should have forgotten it by this time if I had."

"Then my apology is what you would tech-

nically describe as a lost motion?" said Latimer.
"Let us turn into Main Street."

But at the first corner in that dazzling thoroughfare, Latimer stopped and pointed excitedly to a poster in front of a movie theatre.

"Miss Winthrop," he said.

"I've seen her frequently—on the screen that is," said Filbert.

"I have met her in person," said Latimer, trying hard not to be supercilious.

"Oh!" said Filbert, with something like awe.

"Should you like to go in?"

"By all means," said Latimer; and then, turning abruptly, raised his hat in the direction of a group of young girls who fell into line behind them.

"Good evening," he said; and turned back to his companion.

"An acquaintance in Fairview?" said Filbert.

"It's that housemaid at the Bauers'."

CHAPTER XV

THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

THE next afternoon found Latimer one of the crowd that jammed the sidewalk on both sides of Main Street, doing his share toward making Patriot Day in Fairview a success. The factories had let out for the event which was to begin as a parade and culminate in a flag-raising over the unfinished Social Hall. In the throng he had lost both Hartmann and Filbert. The president of the International Can and Car was drafted for conspicuous and hazardous duty on the speaker's platform, and had disappeared soon after breakfast in a state of intense calm and a silk hat, but not until he had solicited Latimer's candid opinion on a manuscript of the speech that was to accompany the presentation of the flag.

At this precise moment when Latimer found himself alone in the crowd, the procession was half over. A National Guard regiment, borrowed for the occasion from the capital, had led the march, followed by the fire companies, the Civic League,

the Chamber of Commerce, the Veterans of '98, and the children from the primary grades. One of the ever mysterious pauses which make a parade so excellent an example of dramatic suspense now ensued. The Home Guard, the borrowed Coast Defense Company, and the Junior Scout contingents were yet to pass in review. It was the interim when processional crowds divide their time between craning their necks for the first view of the oncoming lines and saluting friends in the upper windows.

Latimer strolled down a side street for a bit of shoulder room and air. He was flushed and tremulous. He was at all times susceptible to the sound and sight of marching feet. In town, the shuffle of the crowd on the platforms of the Elevated, the swirl of the evening migration on lower Broadway, regularly carried him away on a tide of vast yearnings, of passionate identification with multitudes of men of whom, individually, he was afraid. This afternoon, at Fairview, as he watched the fighting men go by, generously spaced to make the most out of the meagre resources in hand, he caught himself thinking how there, in Europe, myriads were moving in solid ranks, compared with whom this was but a tragic handful.

He thought of the German columns pouring across the Dvina, towards the Isonzo, into Rumania. The odds against us were appalling, when one stopped to calculate in cold blood, but he was not in cold blood. He was proud and confident. Fairview's procession of 2,000 men and children was a sufficient answer to the German challenge. But he must not think of the war.

Half way down the block from Main Street, he halted. Outside the doorway of a garage some one was standing tiptoe on a soap box and straining his eyes all the way towards Main Street and over the heads of the crowd for a glimpse of what might be going on. It was an absurd procedure, thought Latimer. There was nothing to prevent the man from taking his stand close behind the crowd, whence from his soap box, he could easily dominate the situation. And odd again, it was not the type of man who usually watches parades from a soap box. He was, for Fairview, exceedingly well dressed; he was obviously not of the factory crowd, nor yet of the store-keeping crowd. He should be sitting behind a law desk, perhaps at a directors' table, and that not in Fairview, but in the city. Latimer was puzzled by the complex of furtiveness, despondency, and indifference in the

man. His lips were tight drawn. And in his eye a gleam of—

Defiance? Yes, thought Latimer, but depression too. The stranger stood aloof from the crowd out of choice yet the crowd drew him. He resisted, but there was pain in the effort.

"I wonder if we are in the same mood," Latimer addressed him. "The thing tears at me."

The stranger turned on his rostrum, and frowned.

"How?" he said.

"These marching men get into my blood, yet I find it hard to bear," said Latimer.

The stranger jumped from the soap box. "Then you don't approve of our being in this thing?" he demanded.

Latimer flamed up, and shivered at the same time.

"It is a righteous war and inevitable. I would not have it end—but I am under doctor's orders. I must not talk. Still you, as a resident of Fairview—"

His companion was now leaning against the lintel of the doorway with his hands thrust deep in his pockets and his eyes on the sidewalk.

"I am not popular on Main Street," he said; and then, defiantly, "There is no righteous war."

Latimer remembered doctor's orders. He spoke quietly:

"Pardon me, it is a hackneyed term, but with you it is a matter of—

"Conscience? Yes. You will now refuse to be seen talking to me?"

Latimer shook his head.

"There are so many matters on which I don't know my own soul. How shall I pass judgment on yours?"

"Ah, then you do understand?"

"With my mind, yes," said Latimer. "But not with my heart. I cannot imagine myself in your place. But I can recognize your place in the general scheme of things, if that is any comfort."

"That is all I ask," said the other. "Only do me this much justice: Don't imagine that I think myself holier than my neighbor. Don't say of us that we have set ourselves apart from the common ruck of mankind as a little band of the select for whom is reserved the building of the new world. I am not thinking of the future but of to-day. I am to-day what I cannot help being, just as my neighbors are what they are. Which of us shall

prevail let the future decide. My own belief is that neither of us will prevail, but that the future will be what it will be, to some extent, because I am what I am now."

"You have felt the penalties?" said Latimer.

"That's a matter of course," and Latimer was pleased with the lack of bravado or false humility.

"Ostracism?"

"Naturally."

"Persecution? Bodily jeopardy?"

"It may come to that. My business has of course gone to the devil. I am an architect. Gilbert's the name. The Social Hall, where the flag is going up—I built it."

Latimer's hand went out.

"I'm sorry. And it hurts?"

Gilbert held the other's hand wistfully.

"It hurts. Yet it doesn't matter."

"In a case like yours there is only one thing that really hurts and really does matter," said Latimer.

"And that is doubt. Does it come?"

"It does," said Gilbert, studying the sidewalk.

"Not from without?"

Gilbert waved the outer world aside.

"It hurts if friends won't speak to me. I have been pitched out of the club—I built the clubhouse.

The local paper calls me Herr Gilbert. But that is nothing. But when I see a splendid new world being born out of this war that I hate, then I am shaken."

On Main Street the fife and drum struck up; a crackle of cheers signaled the resumption of the march, and the rear ranks of the crowd, the two could see, surged forward.

"I want very much to witness the end of the procession," said Latimer, and hesitated.

Gilbert threw up his head.

"I have not surrendered my right to look upon the flag, and I dare say for the moment people will not be interested in me. Come on."

"I suggest your bringing the soap box," said Latimer.

Once only, as the Home Guard was passing, Latimer ventured to glance at his companion and found him looking straight before him, his eyes slightly puckered up, though there was no sun to speak of. After the Home Guards there was another delay.

"You were saying?" asked Latimer without turning around.

"I was saying that I can reply to others but cannot always answer myself," Gilbert spoke in a dry

clipped tone. "This war which I hate has already put the world fifty years ahead. Ideals which have been dear to me, perhaps because they seemed so far away, are blossoming into life under the warm rain of blood. I am originally New England, Calvinist and crank. I was brought up to think of liquor in terms of damnation. The war is wiping out booze. I believe in the perfect equality of women. The war is now enfranchising and liberating them. I have always hoped to see Labor come into its own, and the insanities of our competitive system cured out of existence. The war will probably put the working men in the saddle. I believe with all my heart in democracy, and the war is cutting a red furrow across the earth for the harvest of democracy. The damn fools!"

"Meaning whom?" said Latimer.

"Meaning the asses who think they can hurt me or frighten me by driving me from the clubs and into bankruptcy; making things impossible for my wife at home and the children in school; and inviting me to go home to the Kaiser. But I'd like to see the horsewhip that can hurt like the black doubts which come at night. Then the Enemy shows me all these wonderful things that I have

longed for, in a wonderful new world, and asks why haggle about the price."

"Well then?" said Latimer.

"I stick," said Gilbert and stared ahead more intently than ever.

The Junior Scouts were now passing in the full panoply of khaki and arms, and ever so much better drilled than their elders of the Home Guard. And at the sight of those miniature martial legs swinging in unison, and the young faces fixed in chubby ferocity, Latimer felt his throat tighten, and his eyes grow dim. He had seen them before, in peace times, these infant masqueraders and they were then what the women in the crowd had called them, "cute, the dears." But now—now—masquerade? No! Another two years of war and some of these infants—

He felt his arm caught fast in a clutch that stung and shook. He knew what was coming, before Gilbert broke out:

"This is horrible! All over the world children are marching with rifles! Who has thrust rifles into their hands? Who is it that has laid his curse on the future?"

"Don't you know?" said Latimer gently. "I think I do."

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"If one were only certain," and Latimer saw the man's fists clench at his side.

"Then what? Surely not violence, Gilbert? Not vengeance? Not war?"

"I am only human," said Gilbert. "Look at them! Babies!"

CHAPTER XVI

LATIMER CONVALESCENT

ON the third day of his sojourn in Fairview, at three o'clock in the afternoon, Latimer found himself. With the cure, there came a sudden onset of homesickness which would immediately have put him on board a train for the city, in utter disregard of the state of his wardrobe and sister Harriet's feelings, if Hartmann had not interposed a plea. The two others had departed the day before for points south and west, but the doctor still had several wearisome truths to impress on a Board of Health which was "automatically" impervious to common sense. If Latimer would wait overnight, they could go down to the city together in Foreman's car, which the magnate had left at Hartmann's disposal. The harrowing picture of Hartmann on a lonely trip to New York, sketched by that good man almost with tears in his eyes, was more than Latimer could bear. He would wait.

And another reason was that Latimer felt the

need of atonement. Of the three days in Fairview, to Hartmann's chagrin, Latimer had devoted just two hours to the new model town. Try as he would, his interest in the architect's plans for the great Social Hall and the Foreman Hospital would not bubble. After he had several times failed to distinguish between the blue prints for the drainage and those for the water-mains system, Hartmann sorrowfully abandoned him. Thereupon Latimer joyfully turned his back on the Elizabethan town on the hill, and spent his hours until far into the night in the streets of that other Fairview which in another six months would be no more, but which drew him poignantly to its malodorous, unsanitary self.

It was precisely the difference between life and a blue-print that held him. He knew it was unjust to Foreman and his model town that he should be thinking of him as tinkering upon a new kind of machine; yet there was the feeling. Even Hartmann, for all the humane emotion that drove his bulky frame to action, was engaged upon a project, a problem, and therefore a formula. The pity of it, that as soon as you have more than one man to face, you are no longer dealing with souls, but with problems.

There were no problems in the unkempt streets of the old town on the edge of the flats; that is, to the people who lived amid the landscaped family wash, gossiped from windows, or gave utterance to sententious truths from around slow-burning corncocks. They were to themselves an end in themselves. They were not class-conscious, or church-conscious, or conscious of anything but the regular beat of an ancient routine. The sense of depression which attacked Lorimer during that first walk with Filbert had vanished overnight. He felt no need to idealize these people as the vanguard of a cleaner and more prosperous generation. They were sufficient for the day, without the apology of galvanic cabbage-patch humor and sunshine-alley sentiment. They were ultimate and serene.

"Blessed are the poor," thought Latimer, "for they shall not keep up appearances. Neither must they read the books that are written about them."

On the third morning of his stay at Fairview he was escorted through the Intercontinental shops by Bauer himself. Latimer had hitherto thought of Labor in terms of Meunier and Pennell; of half-naked men sweating in the heat of blast furnaces, or strained out of human semblances under enor-

mous weights and masses. What he really saw in this particular factory were long cathedral aisles of machinery. He heard singing wheels and the drone of belting. And here or there was a worker bending over his tool-bench in scholarly contemplation of a nondescript bit of metal, like Carrel over his test-tubes.

Latimer recalled the wonder that always possessed him at home, when he stopped to peer down into excavations where men groped about in a crazy network of mains and conduits, or when he looked up to the steel girders swinging into place on the new skyscrapers. Only now and then would he catch sight of a heavy sledge in play, or the heave of muscles. As a rule men moved about in the tangle of cloaca as if engaged in an elaborate minuet. He saw men poised on the end of a steel beam go through a graceful calisthenics, with a measured wave of the arm, now this way, now that way, thirty stories above the sidewalks. Yet the subways got themselves dug, and the pavements were laid,—and torn up again,—and the skyscraper grew a couple of stories overnight. He wondered at the serenity of labor.

They stopped to watch a middle-aged man in overalls filing away at a longish piece of steel which

for the life of him Latimer could not identify. Bauer told him it was part of the mechanism of a field-gun, which would be carried through an indefinite number of processes here at Fairview, and then would be shipped somewhere else for justification, and would then go partly by water and partly by rail somewhere else, where the gun would be assembled; after which the gun would be tested, approved, checked up, and shipped—somewhere else.

Latimer shook with impatience at the deliberate, precise arm-motions of the man at the bench. "Out there," he saw little groups of weird mannikins, in a smear of fog and mud and blood, clawing into the sides of a crater under the counter-barrage of the Prussians, and praying for the guns which they had outrun. But the guns were stuck fast in the Flanders slime, and the crew were breaking their backs under the wheel-hubs, and the drivers were lashing away at the horses.

"For God's sake hurry!" Latimer cried out in an inward agony, as the Fairview worker picked up a wad of cotton waste and studiously polished off the metal joint he was dallying with. One, two, three; one, two, three—while the sweat was on Latimer's face.

And then, in a moment, he understood that here in Fairview and there near Ypres men were *working*, while he, Latimer, was only rasping the nerve-strings of his own soul. Why, of course: the gun crew in Flanders was probably standing about quietly debating the best way of getting the wheels out of the mud. A man was hurrying across fields for a plank. The second lieutenant was simultaneously trying to establish telephone communications with battery headquarters and to borrow a cigarette. And this gun now in the making at Fairview would be six months in reaching the front. Latimer saw the machinist reach for a gauge of some sort and adjust it with infinite contemplation; and there came to him a great calm.

"I am cured," he said aloud.

"I beg pardon?" Bauer wondered.

"I was saying that I shall probably take the night train for New York," said Latimer. "This has been supremely instructive."

But as we have seen, Hartmann prevailed with him to wait till the following morning, whereupon Latimer telegraphed notice of his imminent return to his wife, and his excuses to sister Harriet. But to Manning and the promised visit he held himself pledged. Manning lay on the direct road

to the city, and it would be only decent to drop in for a moment to explain.

Hartmann's professed lack of interest in the "meganism" of the automobile had no relation whatever to his ability in the driver's seat or a pretty taste for eating up the road. Partly it was the rebound from the strain of three days negotiations with the Fairview Board of Health, made up exclusively of "unmidigated tonkeys."

Only twenty-four hours ago the needle on the speedometer would have caused Latimer intense anxiety. Now the flush of new-found health was coursing in him, and he was inclined to regard Hartmann as an unnecessarily timid driver. At intervals he burst into song; whereat Hartmann sneered bitterly, until such a time as a succession of clear stretches of roadway permitted him to join in with a dreadful howl which, he explained to Latimer, was the first verse of *Gaudeamus*. In the course of the next three hours he sang that first verse thirteen times, but, he told Latimer, by no means as well as he used to do it thirty years ago.

For some time Latimer had been expectantly studying the countryside, and there it was: an ugly iron bridge, a willow by the road not far from

the river-bank, a flat rock jutting out into the water, a white church steeple—they were entering Westville, to be sure.

"Hartmann," he said, "do you mind stopping for a quarter of an hour?"

"Stretch your legs, hey? All right. I think I can recall the second verse."

"There is a sick woman here. Will you look at her?"

Hartmann threw up his hands.

"How can I? Without being asked?"

"Unquestionably you can satisfy yourself without a formal examination. To that purpose I have devised the necessary fiction," said Latimer, and from his pocket he drew a box of chocolates which he had purchased at Fairview. "We stop off merely to leave this for the little girl, with whom I am on established terms. You accompany me reluctantly. If you need a little more time for consideration, we may ask for a glass of milk."

They found the family around the kitchen-steps. The woman was rinsing clothes between two tubs. The husband was dreamily improvising over the repair of an intricate piece of fishing-gear, with the little one at his side. The three severally responded to the unexpected visitors. In the woman's eyes

there was wonder. In the little one's, a bright scrutiny which searched Latimer's person and settled with a triumph of intuition upon the candy-box in his hand. The man saw in Hartmann the longed-for purchaser of this country home that he hated; he saw release and—town again.

"As we came by it occurred to me," said Latimer, and developed his lie with sufficient manfulness; nevertheless the conversation dragged.

"The little one should be at school," he said.

"Teacher's sick," announced the child gleefully.

"Such a school as it is," said the woman with the first sign of discontent that Latimer recalled in her. Pause; and they all turned to watch the child in her tour of exploration through the candy box.

"You can give us a glass of milk," said Hartmann, "right where we are?"

"Sam," she said; and the man buoyed up by a great hope, started off with unwonted energy toward the spring where the milk was cooling. His wife went into the kitchen to wipe her dripping arms.

"You find the symptoms?" whispered Latimer, hoping against knowledge.

"The most conspicious symptom, yes," said

Hartmann sullenly, and nodded toward the man crouching over the spring. "He needs a regular job."

"There should be a regular job for him at Fairview," said Latimer. "And for her, one of your new houses. They could let this place. It would pay them to abandon it."

"You are a disintegrating sentimentalist, friend Latimer," grumbled the other. "Make the offer. I will see to it."

But the woman shook her head. "Sam is not strong enough for a factory." What she was thinking, of course, was that her man was not strong enough for the temptations of town. "We came out here because it was better for me." Again she was lying.

"Much bedder for you, a gleam small house with windows and a good kitchen," burst out Hartmann. "You should not work."

She shook her head, and Latimer despaired. Then an inspiration came.

"For the little one there will be an ideal school, playgrounds, a swimming pool, games, theatricals." He tried to speak with the nonchalance of a well-bred catalogue.

"A good school?" she said, looking up in haste.

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"Equal to the best private schools in the country," said Hartmann.

She looked back toward her husband, stared down at the child, and yielded.

"We'll be ready for you in another month," Hartmann told her.

"We will come," she said; and of her own initiative held out her hand to Latimer. "Thank you," she said, and her eyelids trembled.

CHAPTER XVII

CRIMINOLOGY

WHAT more natural than the warm afterglow of self-approval which descended upon our two travelers as they climbed back into the car? To Latimer's suggestion that Hartmann now "let her out," the reply was a shrug of resentment at superfluous advice, followed by a silent "Watch me!" The motor sang like a telegraph wire in the wind. They reconstructed the second verse of *Gaudeamus* out of their joint and fragmentary memories, and shouted it to the flying landscape. Between spasms of harmony Latimer lit two cigarettes, keeping one for his own use and inserting the other, after a few preliminary puffs, between Hartmann's lips. As the wind and the sun poured into his veins, Latimer removed his golf-cap and put it on again with the peak on the nape of his neck, like the pictures of Barney Oldfield in the Sunday Supplement. He was seized with a vast pity for the proletariat of the four-cylinder cars whom they overtook and passed with a swirl and an occasional ironic wave

of the hand. He found his thoughts running to roadsters, sedans, town cars. He pumped oil with more ardor than precision.

With this result: that they took the wrong turn just beyond Westville, and when Latimer began looking for the cross-road where he had met Margaret, they were just twenty-one miles out of their way. But more than that. As they flashed by a sign-post announcing the town limits of Greensborough and made a sudden corner, Hartmann had to throw all his weight into the brakes to avert collision with a uniformed figure in the middle of the road waving the conventional open palm.

"What's wrong?" said Hartmann, as innocently as a German chancellor on Belgium.

"Thirty-five miles an hour's the matter," said the constable.

Hartmann shouted,—

"At dirty-five miles an hour I should have been through your tinkly liddle town before I had endered it. This is an oudrage!"

"You can explain that to the jedge," said the officer. "That is, if he ain't away for his dinner. Give me a lift an' I'll show you where we turn in."

The subsequent colloquy was futile.

Greensborough's court-house occupied one wing of an imposing pile of municipal brickwork which their captor designated as the town workhouse. A progressive community spirit spoke in well-paved streets, ornamental lamp-posts, plate-glass store fronts on Main Street, and three moving-picture theatres within two blocks. Still, it was a wonder why so small a place as Greensborough should stand in need of such elaborate prison facilities.

"Now if it were a loonadic asylum, I could understand," remarked Hartmann with vicious intent; "but a chail—"

They found the court-room deserted. The "jedge," then, was at dinner, unless, it occurred to the constable, the jedge might be in the "labbertory." He pronounced the word with unmistakable pride in his mastery of the term and equal contempt for the thing it described.

"Laboratory?" said Hartmann. "Lead the way."

They marched through a confusion of wainscoted corridor and stopped before the open door of what Latimer might easily have accepted for the psychological experimentation room at his old college, except that everything was varnish-new and the sunlight came in cheerily through the window.

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A gray-haired young man, bending over a desk, raised his head and smiled inquiringly, a little innocently Latimer thought, through horn-rimmed spectacles.

"Dr. Wheeling," said the constable, with a semi-military curtness which was at the same time a salute and an introduction.

Latimer hastened to explain.

"We are in search of the officiating magistrate, having been apprehended on the absurd charge of violating the traffic regulations by an official whose zeal we can commend more easily than his intelligence."

Dr. Wheeling was sympathetic.

"Judge Pomeroy will not be back for some time, I regret to say."

"He takes dinner at home, of course?"

"To be precise, no," replied the prison doctor. "The fact is, his Honor at this moment is some distance out in the country inspecting a prize milch-cow with a view to purchase."

"That would be Al Thomas's Jersey," observed the constable.

"Exactly," said Wheeling. "Won't you be seated?"

"But that is impossible," shouted Hartmann;

and to their captor, "Come along and help us hunt up your judge. I'll make it worth your while."

The constable hesitated, and Latimer, to bridge the pause, did the polite thing.

"You have here an admirably equipped institution," he remarked; and his tone was the connoisseur's.

Wheeling beamed at him through his goggles. "It's a very decent plant for a town of our size."

"It is my surmise," said Latimer, "that this very impressive penal establishment has been built around your laboratory, Dr. Wheeling, and not the other way about."

The doctor stared in amazement. "How could you have guessed?"

"Shall we call it intuition?" smiled Latimer. "When I am in the presence of the scientific spirit I know it. My name is Latimer."

Wheeling came forth from behind the desk and shook hands.

"May I suggest that your plan of hunting up the Justice is a feasible one?" he addressed Hartmann. "In the meanwhile, if Mr. Latimer is interested in our work here, I should be delighted—"

And when Hartmann and his turnkey were

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gone, "Your surmise, Mr. Latimer, as to the origin of this institution touches me particularly, because it was largely through my efforts the thing has taken form; if I may say it without boasting. My interests have always run in the direction of mental research, especially of the criminal type. I have written for the scientific journals. It was difficult work converting the local authorities to my plans; a special bond issue was necessary. Even then, as a straight penitentiary, this plant would never have been erected; but as an experiment station in criminal psychology it had decided publicity value. The argument appealed to our Chamber of Commerce. Without boasting, we have put Greensborough on the map. Only—" he sighed.

"The material is not as abundant as one might wish?"

"Unfortunately, no. Our cells are often quite empty. That is why I have been compelled to resort to volunteers. The great majority of our citizens have subjected themselves to my tests, out of a commendable public spirit. But the population of Greensborough is limited."

Latimer glanced about the room.

"Strictly speaking," he said, "I am not yet

within the grasp of the law. Nevertheless, until my companion's return, if I can contribute to your stock of data—"

Wheeling went pink with delight.

"This is generous, Mr. Latimer. I hardly—"

"Not at all. Shall we proceed?"

"Immediately," cried Wheeling. "Allow me to place your chair in the full light. That's it."

From drawers and shelves he brought forward the simple materials of his business, and sat down before his desk, from top to toe the tingling professional.

"I trust, Mr. Latimer, that you approach this examination in the candid and impersonal spirit in which it is attempted," said Dr. Wheeling. "It is all in the interest of science, of course. A sympathetic attitude on your part is essential to the validity of the tests we are about to undertake, even when these may seem to you superfluous or meaningless."

"Does that frequently happen?" said Latimer, with the kindly intention of expressing interest.

But it brought up Wheeling with a start. His formula of introduction was really a sort of hypnotic chant intended to reduce the subject to the

proper passive state. He looked at Latimer and wondered whether it had been necessary in the present instance.

"We will begin," he said, "with a simple experiment in visual observation. I shall pick up a black piece of paper with one hand and a white piece of paper with the other. You will tell me, as soon as you are certain of your facts, which hand holds which. Close your eyes, please. Now!"

Latimer assigned the proper slip to the proper hand.

"Five seconds," said Wheeling, in a tone of surprise, as he jotted down the answer to a prepared form. "May I ask, Mr. Latimer, whether you have ever been tested for color-perception before this?"

"No," said Latimer. "Am I at all out of the normal?"

"More than twice the average reaction time," said Wheeling. "We will try again—this time with red and blue. Close your eyes, please. Now!"

Latimer made the correct distinction.

"Extraordinary," said Wheeling. "Three seconds. Normal vision should distinguish blue from

red more slowly than black from white. You have reversed the process."

"Perhaps this may be the reason," said Latimer. "In the first instance I immediately distinguished the black from the white, but it took me some time to recall that, sitting opposite me, your right hand corresponded to my left and *vice versa*. In the second experiment I had fixed the identity of your right hand and your left. If you had asked me simply to point out the red and the blue and the black and the white, the results would probably have been different. It might be worth while to repeat the test."

"Do you think so?" said Wheeling.

"I am convinced of it," said Latimer.

They went through the test again, and it was as Latimer had foretold. The revised figures showed that Latimer was slightly above the average in color-perception for the ordinary type of prison inmate. Wheeling was delighted.

"Rapidity of concentration next," he said.

"Take this paper and pencil and hold yourself ready to begin writing when I give the order. Ready? Write the name of seven common garden vegetables."

"Spinach, tomatoes, potatoes," wrote Latimer.

"A simple soul," he thought, as he lifted his eye momentarily to catch the fleeting vision of the next vegetable, and saw Wheeling peering at him with that kindly, meaningless smile through the thick lenses of his horn-rimmed spectacles. "A simple soul, eager for the truth. Always the same goal; the difference is only in the method of approach. Truth! Men have sought her through the clouds that cover the awful light of the face of the gods, in the torture of their own flesh, in the eyes of women, in the Arctic silences of their own thoughts, in the forests, in the mountains, in the deserts, in cloisters and catacombs"—Cucumbers, lettuce, parsley, beans, he wrote hastily and then as he caught Wheeling's astonished yet patient gaze, "I believe I could do it faster than that. My mind wandered."

"But that is just the point," said Wheeling. "As an index of mental coördination it is the first, unrehearsed attempt that counts. As such the exceptional length of time you have taken is of the very highest significance. Excuse me while I set down a special remark that does not come under any of my schedules. Or, better still, while I am writing, I give you this sheet of paper on which you will kindly draw, without unduly hurrying

yourself, the outlines of a pig, a tree and a house."

Here indeed was a task that called for the utmost concentration. Outside of the geometrical figures which he had drawn for some forty years on the college blackboard, Latimer was helpless with pencil in hand. The elements of perspective were a mystery to him; and expression was utterly beyond his powers. He succeeded in drawing the rough two-dimensional house which is the favorite of infancy, with curly smoke coming out of the chimney and a flight of steps hanging several feet below the level of the ground. He did a little worse on his tree, which was only a telegraph pole with arms projecting at acute angles. Recognizable both, perhaps; but the pig was a complete disaster.

"That is pretty poor, isn't it?" he said; and there was no pretense in the anxious query.

"It is not a question of good or poor," said Wheeling, "but of the age-class in which your technical execution would place you. From that point of view the drawings are certainly extraordinary. Somewhere between five and six years I should say."

"You mean a child of five or six would be expected to do as well as this," said Latimer, and flushed scarlet.

"The average child," said Wheeling. "Twenty-three children out of a hundred of that age-class would do better. So much for manual coördination. Now tell me as fast as you can how much is three times 4?"

"Twelve," Latimer shot at him before he had finished.

"Good! Eight times seven?"

"Fifty-six," said Latimer with the same precipitation.

Wheeling flushed with excitement. "We are on the track of what is evidently a special aptitude. Thirteen times thirteen.

"One hundred and sixty-nine."

"Twenty-four times twenty-four?"

"Five hundred and seventy-six."

Wheeling's eyes were a gleam. What a case! The doubly eccentric mind! In many instances below the normal, in one instance rising far above it. How far above, he trembled to think. Then he took the plunge.

"One hundred eleven times one hundred eleven?"

"Twelve thousand, three hundred twenty-one," said Latimer.

"Two hundred thirteen times two hundred thirteen?"

"Twenty-seven thousand, three hundred sixty-nine," said Latimer.

"Amazing!" said Wheeling; and upon Latimer's soul, still writhing under the humiliation of that subnormal pig, the word fell like balm. Nay, more, in the upswing of spirits, self-confidence returned, and he felt prepared to meet Wheeling on a footing of human equality.

"Let us go back for a moment to a simple reaction test," said Wheeling. "That is essential if we are to strike the balance for the mental account. I will read out to you a string of numbers among which will occur the numeral 4. As soon as you hear that number you will tap with your finger on the table. It may occur once or several times. You will tap every time. That is plain?"

"Quite," said Latimer.

"Three, six, seven, six, six, three, eight, nine, six, five, eleven, nine," began Wheeling.

"Undoubtedly a simple soul," said Latimer to himself, his mind swimming lazily on the droning rhythm of Wheeling's notation. "No trace of

originality, I should say, but susceptible to guidance from above. A loyal private in the army of science, his not to make reply, but only to follow where others lead. Upon the minds of one hundred thousand such men the true mind of science builds its generalizations. The true mind glimpses the vision and flings it out for a hundred thousand common men to prove or disprove with their life's work.—Four!" He smote the table with both his fists as the signal number pierced to his brain.

Wheeling smiled.

"That is the third time I mentioned four. You don't mind my saying that you present the very interesting example of an exceptionable faculty rising above a low level of general mental coördination."

"Not at all," said Latimer.

"Of course I should want to look my data over carefully," said Wheeling. "But at a venture I should say that you belong,"—he hesitated,—“I speak impersonally, of course,—in the thirteen- or fourteen-year class."

"Allowing for the multiplication exercises?" said Latimer.

"Yes, that would be the weighted average. To

make the test complete I should have to take your cranial measurements."

"You suspect—?" said Latimer.

"Characteristic criminal stigmata? I should hardly say that. But I can see peculiarities—the lobar formation—"

"Tell me this, Dr. Wheeling," said Latimer, breathing heavily. It was a sign of rising steam in the boiler of his temperament. "Your system consists in testing my mental capacities by the standard of the child?"

"Exactly."

"But you haven't asked me to skip a rope." Wheeling stared.

"That is not part of our regulation test," he said.

"And yet it is plain," sputtered Latimer, "that at skipping a rope I should probably be inferior to a child of eight. I should likewise be very low down in the scale at going down a banister, or creeping under a gate, or walking on my hands. And if it came to screaming myself red in the face and getting my toe into my mouth, I should be set down very low in the scale of infantilism."

"But our tests," said poor Dr. Wheeling.

"I mean," shouted Latimer and caught himself on the edge of an explosion.

CHAPTER XVIII

LATIMER PREACHES

INSTEAD of eating up the road in the late afternoon, our heroes, at 7.30 of the same evening, were sitting in state at the speaker's table and in close proximity to the toastmaster, at the annual banquet of the Greensborough Chamber of Commerce. They were there at Dr. Wheeler's invitation, and the manner of it was simple enough. For when Hartmann had returned from his prolonged but successful quest of Judge Pomeroy, and Latimer rose to say farewell to the eminently likable Wheeler, the good doctor hesitated, looked out of the window, and wondered if—if—

Yes?

Well, here was this dinner of the Chamber of Commerce. He had won them over to his ambitious experiments in scientific penology, but, of course, there was always criticism. It was a fight to consolidate one's gains. The Opposition sheet was yelling economy in war time. Now if Wheeler could have for his guests at the dinner two dis-

tinguished visitors from New York, one an eminent specialist, one a man of exceptional culture and distinguished in academic circles—

“Omit all that, Wheeler.”

Well, they could see for themselves how it would help: The prestige—

“It is pretty well on towards night,” said Latimer. “We can hardly rout Manning out of bed. What do you say, Hartmann?”

“Yes, but glothes!” shouted the eminent specialist, with much greater reluctance than he really felt.

Wheeler pleaded that Greensborough had not yet grown up to the open front as the *sina qua non* for evening festivities. He himself would come just as he was, having shaved and washed, of course.

Our records show that at 8.15 Dr. Hartmann leaned forward behind his neighbor's back and whispered to Latimer who was the second man removed, “Latimer, you are eating too much.”

“I have been doing nothing of the kind,” hissed Latimer.

“I have been watching, Latimer, and at the glosest galgulation you have already engulfed two and a half times the normal condents of the human

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stomach. You are now attacking the cheese and salad in solid formation."

"Hartmann, you can't feed me on air the way you do your helpless patients. When I need a nurse I'll call you." And Latimer picked up his fork.

"You'll need one to-night. Don't say I didn't warn you."

But at this moment the toastmaster rapped for attention. What follows is partly summarized, partly quoted from an account in next morning's *Sentinel*, of what the reporter described as probably the most impressive public dinner ever given during the course of a European War in the incorporated limits of Greensborough. The toastmaster began by saying, without fear of contradiction, that no more patriotic gathering of businessmen could be assembled anywhere in the country than was met here to-night to pledge the loyal and undivided support of Greensborough's business community to the President in the present crisis. He held no brief for Greensborough, but he would be remiss in his duty if he abstained from pointing with pride to the fact that Greensborough's services to the nation were unapproached by any other community in the southern tier. It had been

a time of splendid moral expression, but fortunately, too, of great material prosperity. The wholesale and retail trade, the dairy industry, the railroad shops, the public service corporations were paying higher wages to more men than ever before. He would not, however, intrude on their patience with details. These would be forthcoming in due time from the qualified representatives of these various branches of business life who, it was no secret, were to address them to-night. For the present it was enough to sound the keynote of the evening in which he asked everyone to join, "Greensborough for the Nation."

What was it that lifted Latimer to his feet, foremost among the cheering crowd? Could it have been this exceedingly threadbare oratory—delivered, it is true, with fine earnestness—that brought the tears to our hero's eyes? Hartmann the next day assigned a purely medical reason for the tears, but, as we shall see, Hartmann next morning was not an unbiassed judge.

During the next hour and a half, the two wanderers just managed to keep their heads above the swirling tide of Greensborough statistics. An increase of seventeen per cent in population since the state census of 1915; a wage-roll of nearly a mil-

lion dollars a week; an increase of 115 per cent in the vegetable canning output; an increase of \$17,500 in the Fire Department budget over last year; a new system of street sprinkling; the model penitentiary and laboratory of criminal research which had drawn upon Greensborough the admiring attention of the civilized world—here Latimer applauded rapturously and Hartmann with sufficient enthusiasm;—the \$100,000 bond issue for a new High school; the introduction of the card system in every department of the town government—

"Latimer," whispered Hartmann, leaning forward behind his neighbor's back, "leave that coffee alone. It's your third."

In short, the application of modern methods to every phase of the communal life, involving the purchase of no less than seventy-five library cabinets of six drawers each with an average capacity of 300 cards—

Latimer's head was awl with numbers and curves and ratios, and Hartmann was looking at his watch, when the toastmaster rose. They had with them to-night a visitor from New York, a distinguished medical specialist whose sojourn was not unconnected with a study of Greensborough's model penal institution, a scientist of national, nay

of world-wide fame, whose name, no doubt, would be immediately recognized, and whom he would now ask to address the gathering, if only for a few minutes. He took pleasure in introducing Professor Gardner.

"Hartmann," came in an agonized whisper from Wheeler.

"Professor Hartmann, of course," said the toastmaster.

Hartmann sat stiff in his chair, felt for his throat, gulped down the Woolworth Building and a couple of battleships, snatched at his glass of water, and stood up.

"Chentlemen," he said, "what is the brober advice I can give to an audience of businessmen? It is this: Mind your own business. I have inspected your model benitentiary and glinical laboratory. It is a sblendid insditution. (*Frantic applause.*) When you have hired an exbert who knows his business, let him alone. Hands off, I say, Hands off!"

They gave him a magnificent cheer, and the toastmaster rose. They had with them to-night a visitor, whom, without entering into invidious comparisons, he could properly describe as no less distinguished in his own line than the eminent spe-

cialist to whom they had just had the pleasure of listening; whose notable academic career had been a source of guidance and inspiration to generations of young men, and whose mature wisdom from the pulpit through many years—

“Now who the devil would that be?” thought Latimer—

—“had brought comfort and help to countless audiences. Without presuming to dictate, it was proper, perhaps, that on an occasion like the present he should call on the next speaker for a few words on a topic which must be close to the hearts of all of them—The Ethics of Business. (*Applause.*) He would call on Professor Latimer.

“He should not have eaten so much,” groaned Hartmann as he saw Latimer heave himself slowly to his feet with obvious effort. “He cannot do himself justice after that meal,” and the good man’s soul yearned for his comrade in distress.

Latimer measured the room with his eye, back and forth, back and forth, three times, Hartmann counted with sinking heart.

“His mind is a blank. I must get Wheeler. We must do something.” He tried to catch the doctor’s eye.

“My friends,” said Latimer, “I am grateful to

your toastmaster for the text he has furnished me. It is more than appropriate to the occasion. It is pertinent to my own thoughts as I have been sitting here to-night. The opportunity has been vouchsafed me to put on record certain observations which have been gathering in my mind in the course of years. I welcome this opportunity."

Hartmann cut short his futile efforts to win Wheeler's attention. There was no lack of power in that voice, no tremor of diffidence. Latimer was in good shape. He would speak an hour and a half. And with that the devil of envy entered into Hartmann. Why had he contented himself, when the chance offered, with a dribbling, idiotic school-boy stammer just thirty seconds long? There was so much, he now recalled, that he could have said, and that ought to be said, firmly.

"My friends," said Latimer, "if a student of the nature and phenomena of Evil, if a muck-raker into the potentialities of human iniquity, were to search the literatures and the common vocabularies of all history for a formula that sounds the depths of moral degradation, for the formula of Absolute Sin, he would find it in a phrase of just three words which has come to my

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mind more than once in the course of the evening. That phrase is Business is Business."

"This is a wanton and deliberate insult to a gathering of respectable men," cried Hartmann inwardly.

"It would be a long time, no doubt, before our student of ethics stumbled upon that hideous maxim," said Latimer. "And the reason, my friends, lies in its very familiarity and in its unquestioned acceptance. Every one of us repeats these three words every day of his life. It is one of the small coins of the world's common thinking. Alas, too common. Let your student turn to the chronicles of the court of Rome under the emperor Caligula. Let him scrutinize Versailles under Louis XV. Let him thumb the famous confessions of mankind from Augustine through Casanova to George Moore. Let him peruse the annals of abnormal psychology under the guidance of my good friend Wheeler (*Applause*); he will not find a doctrine that so utterly reeks of shamelessness as this brief apothegm, Business is Business."

"He is repeating himself," sneered Hartmann.

"Go, my friends," said Latimer, "through the roster of the world's trades and occupations other than business; cast them into the same verbal

mould: and see how you only obtain something which the mind rejects as meaningless or the conscience rejects as monstrous. Thus:

Shoemaking is shoemaking
Law is law
Medicine is medicine
Truck farming is truck farming
Tinkering is tinkering
Religion is religion
Stenography is stenography.

Or let us say:

Labor is labor."

"Smart and cheap," said Hartmann.

"Take your tinker," said Latimer. "If you apprehend him in the act of palming off an imperfectly soldered kettle, he will say anything except that tinkering is tinkering. And your office secretary will misspell half your dictation, but she will not assert that stenography is stenography. Your man of law may admit that there are dishonest lawyers, and your physician confess that his profession is plagued with ignorant or rascally practitioners, but neither of them will assert that something in the very nature of his calling demands the violation of the moral law and at the same time

excuses it. This is just what the business man implies when he tells us that business is business. I speak, of course, Mr. Toastmaster, without present or local intention."

The toastmaster silently deprecated the need of any apology.

"To be sure, there is one exception which has no doubt occurred to many of my listeners," said Latimer. "We do say that war is war. And another case, if you will pardon me. We do say that all is fair in love. Nevertheless, on looking more deeply into the matter you will discover a crucial distinction. When a man says that war is war, he implies that its cruelties and abominations are only the inevitable accompaniments of the trade. But the ultimate purpose of war, the settlement of irreconcilable disputes, or the confirmation of peace, or the punching up of the morale of a nation, he will not admit is an ignoble purpose. And so of love; though that is a matter on which I will not presume to speak with authority."

"My Gott, but he has the perfect platform manner," sneered Hartmann.

"Whereas your businessman," said Latimer, "apparently admits, without duress, that he is engaged in an illicit occupation. 'I think, therefore

I am,' said the great Descartes. 'I am in business, therefore I cheat,' says the world at large."

"Pedant," muttered Hartmann.

"So Blackbeard and Captain Kidd might glory in their deeds of cruelty and rapine, but it is not recorded that even such lips have shamed their own profession with the apology that piracy is piracy."

The toastmaster rose to fill the empty water glass for which Latimer was reaching.

"Now the odd thing, my friends," he went on, "and the horrible thing is that men who will spontaneously classify themselves as moral outlaws, on the ground that they are men of business, will insist that the ancient and accepted moralities shall be practised by every other trade and profession. You cannot expect anything of us businessmen, I hear them say virtually, but we demand that you who are not in business act like an honest man. Thus you will hear employers complain that their workmen are shiftless, unfaithful, bent upon giving as little as they can for as large a wage as they can get. But I have yet to hear, from the lips of the most arrogant of capitalists, the damning charge that Labor is Labor. Picture my friends, the amazing, instinctive tribute which the employer

thus yields to his workmen as a matter of course. This laborer is a worthless fellow, a disgrace to his trade. I will discharge him and hire an honest laborer; for there are such. But if your employer is overreached in a bargain by another employer of labor, he takes it as a matter of course. He is content to await his chance to get even. For Business is Business."

"Will he never get through?" wailed Hartmann; and no doubt the reader with him. Well, let the reader be patient. The end is in sight.

"If only, my friends," said Latimer, "this philosophy of moral outlawry were to bring, as compensation, those robust qualities which go with outlawry—courage, a hair-trigger pride, even the splendor of open violence. But such is not the case. Say that one factory-worker has taken away another's job by underbidding him or strike-breaking against him. What will be the state of mind of the displaced laborer? It will be one of solid, normal hate for the man who has done him injury. Frequently it comes to bloodshed, in cases that are euphemistically described as labor warfare. You do not find the striker and the so-called scab hobnobbing at the tavern or calling on each other with their wives. But two men who have

been plotting and contriving against each other in the way of business, will invite each other to spend the week-end. There is no pride, there is no fresh passion of any kind under the formula of Business is Business.

"One word more, and I am done. I wish only to invite your attention to what I may call the infectious nature of the moral leprosy of Business is Business. It pollutes with its touch those other trades. We do not say that labor is labor, meaning that a badly built chair is just as normal as a chair square-set on its four legs. We do not say that sculpture is sculpture because an arm out of proportion is as acceptable as an arm perfectly modeled. We do not say that medicine is medicine because a patient killed is as tolerable as a patient cured. But the carpenter will blame it on a defect in the wood; the sculptor will claim a temporary indisposition; the doctor will say that the patient's heart was congenitally weak. Each man will defend the honor of his trade and plead accident. But let these artisans and professionals turn businessmen, and see how the moral darkness descends upon them. Catch the carpenter in the act of *selling* a crooked chair, the sculptor *selling* a defective bit of marble, the physician *peddling* a noxious

drug, and they are under no moral compulsion to explain. Business is Business.

"My friends," concluded Latimer, "I have heard much to-night of what you men of business have done for our country in the present crisis. I have listened with admiration and pride. But let me entreat you, after you have rendered service to the nation, to render service to yourselves as men. Rid yourselves of this ghastly formula of which I know you to be too frequently the unquestioning victims. The scourge of war can also clean. Let it wipe off this self-imposed brand of outlawry. If you must work evil—and all of us must on occasion—do so because you covet or hate or fear or rage: not because Business is Business."

"And that man," grumbled Hartmann as he rose to applaud with the rest, "has absorbed within the last two hours two and a half times the contents of the normal human stomach."

CHAPTER XIX

NIGHTMARE

SOME time after midnight, in the spacious double bed-room which our two travelers shared at the Greensborough House, facing on the Town Hall plaza, Hartmann's worst fears were realized.

Latimer's broken sleep fell from him like a cloak. He lay on a mattress of down, swaying gently in a delicious firmament of dim lights and arabesques of faint melody, of patterns and tones which he was always just on the point of identifying and not succeeding and blissfully content to keep on trying. Gradually the patterns and the golden shadows drifted towards one corner of the room where they thickened and coagulated into a mass that took on, as you watched it, human form. Ah, thought Latimer, then Margaret had been keeping vigil all night, poor little girl. He must speak to her about it in the morning and insist that she take her rest. He would be firm, but if she refused it would be very agreeable too. She was speaking to him now as she glided forward from

the corner of the room, presumably to give him the fever draught for which his parched throat ached so badly. Only it was odd that it should not be Margaret after all but a stranger that emerged from the shadows in the corner and was now sitting by the side of his bed, on some queer sort of chair. Latimer looked again and it was Filbert—or was it the Toastmaster?—no it was Filbert. And it was a happy conceit that Filbert should have discarded the hideous garments of the modern man. He looked ever so much more attractive in his scarlet doublet and hose under a black cape, and a black velvet hat with a red plume. He wore a short dress-sword of medieval pattern and, as he sat there, he slapped his spurred riding-boot with a yellow leather gauntlet. Except that it was not a chair he was sitting on, but a filing cabinet. Latimer leaned forward to test one of the drawers and the act brought him nearer to his visitor whose face, on closer scrutiny, was not Filbert's, though the resemblance was strong; and yet it was not quite the Toastmaster. The glint in the eyes was too brilliant, the lips were too full-fleshed, and that well-bred ironic smile—

Latimer laughed quietly.

"Strange that your identity should have puz-

zled me at first," he said. "But I know you now. You are straight out of Faust. I saw Edouard de Rezske in my time, but he was heavier by thirty pounds."

"You know what these operatic stars are," the handsome visitor complained. "Gross feeders and disdainful of exercise. The result is that I began as one of the great romantic figures in literature, but have become associated in the public mind with the picture of fat old bassos in tights. Still it hardly matters. I am no longer in grand opera."

"Then you are no longer the Spirit of Negation as that poor devil of a Faust called you?" said Latimer.

"Quite the contrary," said the stranger who had made a wry mouth at the phrase "poor devil," but had passed it by. "I am now a specialist in exact science. You will observe—" and he pointed to the cabinet on which he was sitting.

"A card catalogue?" said Latimer.

"Exactly; but more than that. You will observe that on pressing this button two pairs of wings emerge from the roof and the floor of the cabinet, converting it into a practicable biplane. The motor is concealed in the bottom drawer. I need not dilate on the merits of a device which combines

unexampled facilities for rapid locomotion with a perfect system of ready reference."

"Is it impertinent to ask under what name you now do business?" said Latimer.

"I have never been particular about a label," replied the stranger, "I have been called at different times and in different places by countless names and I have answered to all of them. If I have a preference it is for one of my oldest titles. Names like Mephistopheles, Satan, Beelzebub, and Ashmodai, while sufficient for the purpose of identification, do not convey the sense of personality; and if there is anything I detest it's parading under false colors. If you have a memory for nicknames I am—"

"Of course, I know you now," cried Latimer. "You are the Father of Statistics."

"Precisely. I like the name because it is apt, because it is modern, and yet retains something of the aroma of old tradition."

"And your specialty now is Social Science?"

"Why now? It always has been. It was of me the poet spoke when he said *Nihil humani a me alienum puto*. If you will think for a moment, you will see that I have been the only constant factor in economic evolution. Systems of property and

exchange have come and gone. We have passed from primitive barter to feudalism, and from feudalism to cash, and from cash to credit, and from that I suppose to Socialism—but there was never a time when there hasn't been the devil to pay. Without undue boasting I may fairly claim to be the Original Sociologist."

Again Latimer laughed. He felt his heavy illness falling from him. Not since the debate with his fellow-thinkers in the garage had his faculties enjoyed such free play.

"To be sure! How clear it all becomes now," he said. "And long ago, when you described yourself as walking up and down the earth, it was not idling or mischief; you were practising Research?"

"It is a pleasure to be so sympathetically understood," said the visitor. "Only you will realize, of course, that in the process of time the science of sociology has expanded beyond the grasp of any one mind. If there was one fault to which I must confess in the past, it was a certain lack of concentration. So much so, that whenever men were at a loss for an explanation of anything, they settled it by saying that I was in it. To-day I specialize."

"Statistics?"

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"Yes. Because in the whole range of human study they represent exact truth unvitiated by sentiments. Life can only be seen whole through the medium of percentage. As has been said, 'Stretch not ourselves beyond our measure.'"

"The old habit of quoting Scripture persists," snapped Latimer, whose joy in his visitor was rapidly abating.

The stranger blushed.

"It is a habit," he said apologetically. "Usually I refer to the United States Census for 1910 and the Consular Reports. From such sources I gather, for instance, that the number of children employed in the canning industry has been grossly exaggerated and sentimentalized."

Latimer spoke up hotly.

"You approve of little children working fourteen hours a day in the offal of the packing sheds?"

"I neither approve nor disapprove," said the stranger flipping an imaginary speck of dust from his boot. "My only concern is with the percentage. Most people, I take it, when they cry out against child labor in the canneries, have a picture of hundreds of thousands of children undergoing the unpleasant ordeal. As a matter of fact, there are

to-day, in the vegetable packing stations of New York State—pardon me a moment.”

He bent down to the cabinet and pulled out a drawer in which he fingered rapidly and extracted a white card, a green card, and a salmon-colored card.

“Here we are,” he said. “I always make it a point to cross-index as much as possible. The salmon card shows the number of cannery children under twelve working with the consent of parents. The green card shows orphans under legal guardianship. The white card shows children of both classes who have complied with the state regulations prescribing an operation for adenoids before entering the canneries. Now the total number of children so employed is—pardon me—12,186. Assuming a child population of about two million for the State, this gives us a ratio of six-tenths of one per cent; which is really a very inconsiderable ratio.”

“And if even a sole child were subjected to the unspeakable barbarity!” shouted Latimer.

“That may be,” said the stranger. “It is not for me to condemn such outbursts of generous feeling. I am myself occasionally tempted into the Fallacy of Humane Disproportion. The fact re-

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mains that if we would be ruled by reason and not by sentiment, we must learn to think in percentages and not in absolute numbers. Take, for instance, the children of Belgium. If one reads a list of names, it is disconcerting. If one thinks of the percentage of Belgian children who have suffered—"

"The North," screamed Latimer, "went to war because of an old slave named Tom, a slave woman named Eliza, and a slave child!"

"Exactly," said the visitor. "And the South has been justified in asserting ever since, that Uncle Tom's Cabin misrepresented an entire civilization by taking an infinitesimally small percentage—"

"I will not listen to you," screamed Latimer. "Go away! I will not listen!"

"That is the way of the world," said the stranger, and for the first time his satisfied smile showed signs of waning. "That is because our minds as yet react imperfectly to the statistical outlook. I insist that we must not think of the 1200 children who are annually killed by motor cars in New York City, but of the fact that this number represents only one-twentieth of one per cent of the children who habitually play in the

streets. And the 18,000 orphans who grow up in the asylums are but one per cent of the child population of New York."

Latimer sat up and wrung his hands. Golden circles and arabesques were flashing before his eyes, and through the glow he saw the face of his visitor expanding, expanding. . . .

"Suffer the one per cent of juvenile delinquents to come unto me; that is the way it should be written," Latimer wailed.

The visitor sneered. But as Latimer reached over and seized his water bottle and held it aloft with a menacing gesture, the stranger grew alarmed, and stooping, pressed a button in the cabinet. The cabinet became a biplane, and the motor began to hum, but the car did not gather momentum at once. Latimer took aim.

"What are you up to?" cried the visitor, frenziedly pushing at the emergency button in the cabinet.

"I am Luther, and I give you a taste of the old medicine," Latimer shouted and hurled the bottle. The stranger howled with pain. "Out with you, out, accursed father of the percentage system!"

There was a crash, and a terrific roar from the engine as the machine shot into the air, skidded,

and plunged straight for Latimer. It struck him in the chest and threw him back on the pillows.

"In the name of Heaven, what are you up to, you old lunatic," yelled Mephistopheles who changed and changed and melted and dissolved and solidified into Hartmann, bending over him and shaking him like mad.

"What is it? What is it?" gasped Latimer.

"You've been howling for the last five minutes like a stricken galf, that is the madder; and when I approached, you threw your shoe at my head."

Latimer sank back in shame, but his heart beat against his ribs in joy.

"I'm sorry, Hartmann. I will try to go to sleep."

"You'd bedder," grumbled the eminent specialist backing away cautiously to his own bed. "Two and a half times the condents of the normal human sdomach!"

CHAPTER XX

THE INSURGENTS

THE run was uneventful from Greensborough to the crossroads where Latimer had waged battle with the savage Ford and rescued Margaret from its fell clutches. As Hartmann slackened speed to make the turn towards the Manning place, he fixed a glittering eye on his companion and laid down terms:

"No more social engagements, Latimer. I want to make town before nightfall."

"A quarter of an hour at most," Latimer reassured him. "Just long enough to make it clear to Manning why it is impossible that I should stay."

The machine was still churning around the corner when Latimer sprang up, waved his hat, and shouted. Coming to meet them was a group of four,—Manning, Margaret, and arm in arm with the latter on one side, an alert young woman who was the first to answer Latimer's greeting with a brave flourish of her manly panama—Winifred to be sure; on the other side, Polly.

Before the car had been brought to a stop Manning was swarming over the running-board and grasping at the hand of a long-lost brother.

"I knew you'd come back," he exulted. "I was giving Margaret odds you'd be here before the end of the week. For how long?"

"Only a few minutes, I am sorry to say," Latimer stammered. There was no pretense about his regret in the presence of Manning's warm outpouring, of Margaret's quiet smile of welcome, and that interesting young person Winifred who obviously demanded a more intensive study than their one meeting had afforded.

"I have your promise," wailed Manning. "I have been loading up for you all this time. If you throw me down, life will be unbearable for Margaret."

"You are taking advantage," said Latimer and smiled down at the girl who had given him her hand over the hood of the machine. "You are prettily arrayed, my dear. Was it in my honor?"

"Holiday, Dr. Latimer," said the girl.

"Not the Fourth of July? That is some time off."

"We just make our own holidays, when we feel like it," Margaret laughed.

"To be sure; and that is why father,"—

"I am like the lilies of the field," said Manning. "Holidays and Sundays, after the first feeding in the chicken sheds, I toil not neither do I spin. I put on this red necktie and Margaret sometimes takes me to church."

"With a good conscience?" Latimer spoke, for Manning's own ears.

"I shed my conscience about the year 1908, when we put in the colored supplement," said Manning cheerfully. "Margaret leads me to church and then we run up to the Grimsby's where we spend the morning taking it out of all institutions, ecclesiastical and otherwise. We were on the way now. You will come along, won't you? Don't spoil Margaret's day for her."

Latimer wavered.

"I am in the hands of my friends," he said, and turned to his commanding officer who sat patiently enough over his wheel diagnosing Winifred with a sympathetic eye.

"You must all come up," Winifred declared. "I want to get better acquainted with Dr. Hartmann."

"And who gave you my name, young woman?" snapped the eminent specialist. Now his frown was only an effort to hide the twinge of satisfac-

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tion at being identified by an extremely presentable young woman with an intelligent eye and a confident, cleanly smile.

"I have seen you in court," said Winifred.

Our travelers went pale. Had their criminal record, still so fresh, found them out? And yet it could not be, with Greensborough twenty miles away and presumably no wireless communication.

"In court?" stammered Hartmann.

"Testifying about sweatshop conditions on the East Side," said Winifred.

Hartmann endeavored to conceal a vast sense of relief under a frivolous manner.

"I trust you found nothing to censure in my testimony," he said.

"It stands to reason that you would look at the matter from a somewhat narrow professional point of view," said Winifred. "That's why I thought if the opportunity ever came up—"

"And if I sdop over with your friends, you will be kind enough to point out just where I suffered from a certain opliquidy of vision?"

"I'll do my best," said Winifred.

"Jump in then," said Hartmann, flinging open the door of the tonneau. And with a similar ges-

ture Latimer beckoned in the rejoicing Manning and Margaret and Polly.

The car followed the main road for a quarter of a mile, turned down a curving driveway, and stormed up an incline through a lonely greensward towards a big, white house, squatting amidst a brood of wide porches and greenhouses. Latimer's rich appetite for spacious ease found instant satisfaction.

"The Grimsbys are who?" he asked, twisting back in his seat so as to smile at Margaret and direct his question to Manning.

"Young Grimsby is a millionaire, if that means anything to you nowadays," replied Manning.

"Oh! And what are you doing in that galley?"

"He is also a Socialist. At least he was last Sunday; he may be well in the anarchist camp by to-day, or again he may be following the Progressive light."

"Restless, then?"

"You can always count on finding half a dozen rebel spirits thriving on Grimsby's hospitality. The house bulges with radical thought-waves."

"Then why bring me here?"

"Too late now," crowed Manning as the car swept round before a low porch and stopped. Along the great expanse of verandah just one

figure was visible, and that was at one end of the house, where, half concealed by a pillar, an old lady sat in a rocking chair and knitted.

"Mrs. Grimsby the elder," said Manning quietly, and led the way inside. The sun was switched off as they entered this enormous, cool, darkened chamber. Latimer caught the impression of great stretches of dark-stained flooring; walls palisaded with low bookshelves, from which the reds and greens supplied the only high touches of color in the rooms; couches and chairs of glorious amplitude and softness; and a huge rough-hewn fireplace banked with ferns. His fingers itched immediately for those rows of gleaming volumes, and his back ached for the luxuriant upholstery.

Manning conducted them to a corner near the fire-place where, in the heavy shadows, two women posed on the edge of a divan in an Alma Tadema tableau, and made up the audience for a young man who sat at their feet on a low tabouret and read from a volume which lay flat before him on the floor, his fingers pressing back the pages. Without seeing the young man's face Latimer was prepared to dislike him instantly. But said interlocutory judgment was interrupted by the blond woman who leaped up—was she glad of the respite we

wonder?—and stared at them from under the shade of her hand.

"Dr. Latimer! Hartmann!"

"Mrs. Jamieson," cried Latimer joyfully. "And the Auditorium?"

She waved triumphant palms above her head.

"Settled! The labor people agree to take it."

"Mrs. Douglas Grimsby, my friends," Manning introduced, and the second lady rose to welcome her unknown and unexpected guests. No, she did not rise. Mrs. Grimsby swam up, wafted up, wraithlike, to slim and extraordinary heights, in an integument of tawny, bronze, dull red draperies, and gave them welcome with a mystic smile of the lips and smoldering eyes, that made Latimer think of seraglios, old Nile, Chopin, Aubrey Beardsley, and the Russian ballet, all in one. It made him uncomfortable to have that rich voluptuous gaze envelop him, caress him, utter unfathomable invitations to him, as though their two souls, separated during aeons, had found each other at last.

"I am very glad to meet you," said Mrs. Grimsby.

Well, that was a relief. And it was better still when the same rich, enervating gaze was turned with undiminished power upon Hartmann, upon Manning, and best of all upon Margaret and Wini-

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fred and Polly. The hunted feeling entirely left him.

"Mr. Dawson," Mrs. Grimsby presented, indicating the young man on the tabouret. "You read him every week, of course?"

"I never read anything," said Hartmann and went to sit down near Mrs. Jamieson and talk about our-door hospitals. Latimer envied him his brutal courage. A closer study of Dawson confirmed Latimer in the opinion he had formed of the man on a first view of the back of his head. Dawson was slight and pink cheeked. But if that could have been forgiven, he sported an abortive wisp of a mustache which might be tolerated, perhaps, in the commander of a bombing party in Flanders, but was a crime in civic life.

"Damn this slim-waisted, lisping generation," sputtered Latimer inwardly. And if some one should rise to suggest that his wrath was traceable to the way in which Dawson lifted himself from the floor and took possession of Winifred and Margaret, the available data in the present writer's hands offer nothing in refutation. This much is certain: that the more Winifred flashed back at the teasing, drawling tones of the young man—how he did sprawl in that chair!—and the more Margaret



Made Latimer think of scraglios

sat entranced by the din of combat between the two, the more intense grew Latimer's conviction that Dawson was not worth thinking about—confound him!

It was otherwise with the master of the house who now joined them. He entered abruptly from his study, an open book pressed down on the palm of his left hand with the right, as on a reading desk, and his eyes fixed on the page. "My dear, listen to this," he called out, before he was aware of strangers. Grimsby was not much over thirty, and straight out of the Middle West. In him, however, the Lincoln ruggedness had thinned down almost to frailty, and the Lincoln contours had refined, smoothened, weakened perhaps, into a sensitive and patrician beauty. He was thin to the point of emaciation. An enormous stretch of leg seemed to curl all about him and had enough left over to project into space out of the roomy chair in which Grimsby ensconced himself. And in the eyes a stare—Yes, decided Latimer without difficulty—fanaticism. All in all, a winning if disturbing manifestation, this descendant of New England by way of the Middle West and Oklahoma.

"My dear," said Grimsby when he had accepted

his visitors with a warm, long smile, "listen to this."

For the next half-hour Grimsby read aloud from the book which he had brought with him, from weeklies and monthlies and quarterlies which he garnered from tables and shelves with eager fingers. He read from Sorel, from Liebknecht, from Labriola, from Vandervelde. He quoted from Snowden, from Norman Angell, from Tugan-Baranowsky—and what sort of creature might that be? wondered Latimer—from Copenhagen summaries of obviously inspired communiques in the *Vienna Neue Freie Presse* as reported in the *Lausanne Gazette* and commented upon in the *Madrid Imparcial*. And Mrs. Grimsby listened with that hieratic smile, that smouldering suggestion of sensuous spaces and eternities in which her soul must have been at one with Tugan-Baranowsky—if that was the way the fellow spelt his name—and Liebknecht, and Norman Angell. In the beginnings of time Latimer saw Mrs. Grimsby wrapped in mystic nebulae reading the *Neue Freie Presse*.

"I understand you are in the poultry business," Hartmann's voice boomed out, and Latimer turned upon him eyes of infinite gratitude. What a man

was that, what a man! What a heart of gold! And if Manning looked up in pain, and frantically motioned that abominable inquiry about poultry out of this religious atmosphere, that was proper, too, for a soul as hungry as Manning's.

In the course of the half hour, several desperate endeavors were made in that luxurious chamber to break through the barrage of Grimsby's citations concerning war and the future of the labor movement. Mrs. Jamieson attempted to bring up the need of a Red Cross bazaar among the summer colonists in the vicinity, and was repelled with heavy loss. Winifred led a forlorn hope about a picnic which had been for some days under discussion, and melted away under the Grimsby curtain of fire. Even Manning was stirred to commiseration for his guests—though it must have been a quiet nod of Margaret's that warned him. But his burlesque pretense of anxiety about his holiday dinner brought from Grimsby a friendly smile and a quotation from the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. From sullen resentment Hartmann passed to wonder. His eyes met Latimer's in amazement at this Grimsby soul which could be so passionate about the wrongs of Labor and so impenetrable to this hideous suffering at his elbow. It became for

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Hartmann and Latimer a fascinating inquiry in monomania.

When Grimsby had done reading he gathered up his volumes, pamphlets, and clippings and returned to his library. What would have been rank discourtesy in any one else, seemed only matter of fact for this ardent young spirit, exclusively alive with its own ideas. He had emerged from his workroom because he needed an audience; one person would have been enough. His need appeased, it would be affectation to put himself out for the conventional requirements of hospitality. It was a higher hospitality to claim for himself the same freedom which he assumed his guests would demand.

"The beautiful and sad thing about old Douglas," said Dawson when the door had closed behind Grimsby, "is his tragic confidence in a new world that can be built up out of the old wreckage."

"And how then would you go about building your world?" barked Latimer, preparing to shed his accumulated sorrows upon Dawson's devoted head.

"Clean sweep, and start all over again," said Dawson, with a decisiveness that Latimer bitterly

resented out of those girlish lips under the chiaro-scuro mustache.

"But surely something in the present life has worth, or at least a title to forbearance," growled Latimer.

"What for instance?" lisped Dawson.

CHAPTER XXI

LATIMER MOUNTS A SOAP-BOX

. . . "Not at all," said Latimer, "there is, very emphatically, such a thing as the glory of war. If you know where to look for it."

"To be sure," said Dawson wearily. "The romance of war; the spirit of sacrifice; a nation rising as one man to the call of duty. There's as much romance to a battle nowadays as to a coat-and-pants factory."

Latimer looked at Margaret and kept himself in hand.

"I agree," he said sweetly. "But that is enough, isn't it? Our contemporary magazine literature is aglow with the romance of Business. There is the Romance of Standard Oil and the Romance of Bethlehem Steel and the Romance of the Western Union and of the United States Biscuit Company. By which people mean the romance of very big things that were once very small things. On the score of bigness there is something to be said for the war."

"Big? Yes," laughed Dawson. "Twenty million men up to their waists in the mud, challenging vermin and pneumonia for a cause they know nothing about."

"Well, perhaps," said Latimer. "Assume that there is as little flaming enthusiasm in this war as there was, let us say, in the French Revolution or the Crusades or the battle of Marathon. Let us admit that the Idea, Duty, Liberty, Country, and all that sort of thing exist mainly in the newspapers which stir up war, and the sculptors and painters who commemorate it. Probably the farmer of '76 did not march to battle with quite the glow depicted in *The Spirit of '76*; and the French Revolutionary armies were undoubtedly conscripted; and the Crusades were nourished largely by a spirit of boredom and the hope of plunder. Let us admit that at all times the generality of men have been patriots because they have had to be. I will go so far even as to say that Mr. Dawson's Social Revolution will be brought about by a popular army of indifferents and illiterates and cowards around a nucleus of red-blooded two-fisted men who love the excitement of the thing, and they in turn led by a few men who know what they are about."

"That's rather hard on Dawson," grinned Manning. "And what is more, I don't believe you mean it."

"Besides," interrupted Hartmann, "I want to get into New York before midnight."

"I mean it very seriously within the limitations of the argument imposed upon me by Mr. Dawson," said Latimer. "That is, if there is no glory in the present war, then there has never been glory and never will be. Can't you see, my dear Manning, how absurd it is to argue that there has been romance in the past and will be in the future, but that there is none to-day just because we are too close to the reek of the trenches, the mud, the pain, the monotony that drives men mad, and the ignoble tricks of the diplomats? War close at hand has always been like that; and not only war. What were the wire-pullings and ignoble bargains, I wonder, that preceded Constantine's conversion to Christianity? What was the process of petty book-keeping and bribe-giving that preceded the sailing of three small vessels from the harbor of Palos in 1492? What were the intrigues and the hypocrisies and egotisms that ushered in the first performance of *Tristan*? Either there is no glory to life at any time, or there is glory to life at all times; to the

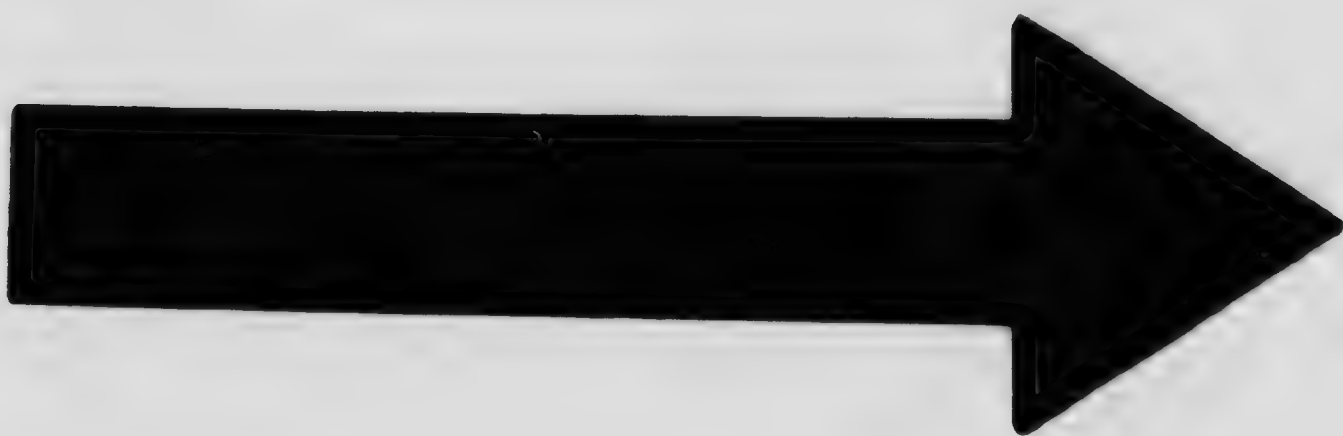
men who are now twisting with rheumatism and vermin around Verdun as to the men who hungered and scoffed and dragged their gangrened limbs under the banner of Joan of Arc. I don't believe that the Maid of Orleans's soldiers were any more holy or ardent than Joffre's men."

"I don't quite understand," said Winifred. "Do you or don't you believe that the soldiers to-day are inspired by an idea?"

"Not consciously, my dear, as far as the great majority is concerned. It is only afterwards that the formula-maker looks over the facts and discovers that on the Somme or in the Carpathians half a million men gave their lives for an idea. It is not for the idea of Fatherland or Democracy that most of them stand in trenches, thinking only of food and sleep, pumping their rifles at an unseen foe whom they do not hate except as the cause that keeps them up to the waist in water and without food and sleep. They do it as a matter of course."

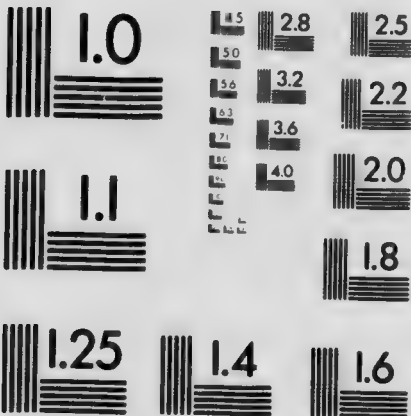
"Exactly," cried Dawson. "Just as before the war they shoveled coal or piled manure or posted up ledgers as a matter of course. Where is the glory in that?"

"Only the glory that abides in fidelity to the



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job," said Latimer. "That is the glory which attaches to the great mass of mankind in peace and in war. The more you make war mechanical, the more you reduce it to the technique of a biscuit-factory or a coat-and-pants factory, by that much more you emphasize the essential glory of the common man's instinct for seeing a job through. The glory of war stands out when you think of war, not as romance or duty or sacrifice or idea, but as Work. Bill and Tommy and Jean and Hans in the trenches may curse at the diplomats who have brought them into the mess, grumble at the officers who lead them into death-traps, at the commissariat that underfeeds them, at the orderlies who come too late with their stretchers and morphine; but that is precisely the same way in which a man responds to his employer, his foreman, and his grocer and butcher in peace-time. Few of us, in the normal life, relish the particular job set for us, but the job as a whole is something which will not admit of question. Suppose we do ask the men in the trenches why they are fighting and they cannot tell us why. What then? They are fighting because for the time being war is Work."

"Latimer," said Hartmann, "I will now proceed outside to look over the car and I will sound

the horn three times at five-minute intervals. After the third blast, I depart."

He shook hands and went out.

"If you wish," said Latimer to Manning, "you may say that this is the tragedy as well as the glory of war; that men who would rather build are ordered to burn, men who would rather sow and reap are ordered to lay waste, men who would rather create are ordered to destroy. But whatever may be the spiritual condition of the men on top who issue the orders, there can be no doubt about the men who obey orders. It is the passion for work—misdirected, perverted, betrayed; but the passion is there. Precisely because war has been bereft of its glow, its adventure, its variety, and has been reduced to a monotone of mud and blood and suffering, it is a tribute to the spirit that will bend to the task. As between the man who says, "I die for France," and the man who says, "It's in the day's work," it is the latter who expresses the higher and more permanent sentiment."

"To be sure," sneered Dawson; "the dignity of labor."

Latimer got to his feet with a lurch and strode close to Dawson. His face was flushed and his breath came in little puffs from his distended

nostrils. Margaret jumped up, as much in alarm for Latimer as for Dawson. But it was not to be assault and battery except in a legal sense. Latimer's heavy hand fell upon Dawson's shoulder and forced that slender youth deep into his chair.

"Young man," said Latimer, "we may as well have it out now and for all. Listen to me."

"But I assure you I have no quarrel with you, Dr. Latimer," cried the frightened young iconoclast. "Nothing except honest intellectual differences."

For all her anxiety Margaret had to turn away and smile.

"For some time," said Latimer, "I have, more or less consecutively, tried to classify you, Mr. Dawson. I have tried to place you as socialist, æsthete, anarchist, pagan, reformer, progressive, and have found it difficult to decide upon the exact category. But now I have it. You are essentially none of the things I have mentioned, Mr. Dawson. You are just a puppy."

"Hello," said Manning; and he fell to packing tobacco into his pipe at top speed.

"That," said Dawson with a forced smile, "is one of the privileges which old age formerly was

supposed to possess. As a substitute for reason, calling names is a traditional mode of attack."

He tried to rise from the chair, but that solid hand pressed him down.

"Listen to me," said Latimer. "I am going to presume a little further on this privilege you have mentioned. I am going to tell you why and how you are a puppy. This you are not in your individual character, which I find rather attractive, but to the extent that you are the victim of an all too common attitude."

The first blare of the auto horn was hailed with silent relief by all but one in the room. It might interrupt a state of tension which was growing painful. Latimer alone failed to hear Hartmann's signal.

"Now the outstanding attribute of the puppy psychology," said Latimer, "is its lack of piety for all things, including itself. I do not, for instance, ask you to reverence me or the things I believe in. But I might ask you not to slur the things you yourself profess to believe in. Take this Dignity of Labor."

"There is nothing to take," said Dawson.

"That was the meaning of your sneer," said Latimer. "You meant that it was a shoddy badge

of honor, devised by the oppressors of labor to soothe the oppressed. You meant that we underpay the workman in wages and make it up in dignity. You meant that we speak of dignity of labor while we, of the upper classes, would do almost anything in the world but labor. You meant that in our hearts we consider the workingman a footless idiot, and that we see no dignity in his stunted figure, or in his rags, or in his meek submission to injustice."

"You have stated it admirably, Dr. Latimer," said Dawson.

"Let me tell you, now," said Latimer, "what the effect has been upon me of much reading in the literature of the wrongs of labor. And it is this: no exploiter of labor, in his inmost heart, has ever thought concerning the workingmen the disgusting and degrading things which are the commonplaces of your conversation and your oratory."

"Too harsh, too harsh," said Manning.

"The simple truth," cried Latimer. "Unquestionably you have meant well, but there are the facts. Long before there was a 'social conscience' in this country, you will recall, Manning, the newspaper cartoonist had found his type for Labor just as he had his type for Capital and

Uncle Sam and Liberty, and what not. And how was Labor represented? As a splendid male, of thews and muscle, bare-armed, with leather apron and sledge-hammer, a figure the Greeks would have loved. This type of labor survives—in the capitalist press. But when your Radical and Socialist friends of Labor draw a cartoon, it is of a slave and a defective, a semi-Caliban. And when you begin to elaborate on your picture, good heavens, what is there that you have not said about the worker in the way of calumny! In order to drive home your case against the capitalist system, you have not hesitated—My dear Dawson, do you know what you have behaved like? Like the ingenious people who make a living by bringing accident suits against street-railway corporations. You are the fake doctors who swear to fictitious damage suffered by plaintiff, backbone permanently wrenched, eyesight affected, nervous system shattered, in addition to that *bona fide* twisted ankle.”

“You deny exploitation and poverty?” said Dawson.

“Never as bad as you would make it out, my dear fellow. Say that we of the capitalist classes had our reason for speaking of the dignity of labor; still we did assign the worker a quality. You

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speaking of him as a brute. We poetified the laborer in his cottage; with you he never has a home, but a den; with you the worker is a slum-dweller. We used to draw chromos of the worker on Saturday night, with the children at his knee. You deny him the capacity for playing the father and the husband,—because he is overworked to be sure, but you deny him his humanity just the same. Strange, isn't it? that good old mossbacks like our ancient ballad-writers should have written of jolly millers on the Dee; that a fine crusted Whig like Macaulay should speak of sturdy butchers who rush from the stall with cleaver in hand to hew down thrones and tyrants; that a cavalier like Walter Scott should have been fascinated by the jolly apprentice lads of the mediæval towns; but that you, the champions of labor, should always be speaking of the laborer as the mean, abject, soulless, joyless, appetiteless brute."

"This is what the factory system has done for the free workers of former days," said Winifred.

"Go to the head of the class, my child. You have said your lesson perfectly," smiled Latimer. "But you know it is all nonsense, this chatter about the whirl of the wheels and the monotony of the factory and the worker reduced to a cog in the

machine. Do you really think that the peasant in the field, that slow, patient ox, gets more of the joy out of life, more variety, more human excitement, than your factory-worker? Do you believe that the men and women who broke their backs over the spinning wheels in the old cottages, had more freedom, more leisure, more creative impulse than your cotton operatives of to-day? Why are the young men and women crowding from the country into the towns? Is it for the gray life of the factory, or is it for the movies? My dear young man, there is more of the joy of life and more of health in the city-worker to-day than the workers have known at any time in the history of labor. But it is a big subject and does not concern me at present."

The auto horn outside broke into a fury of protest. Manning walked to the window and with his arms semaphored to Hartmann for a few moments' indulgence.

"The plain fact is, of course, that your labor champions, with the best intentions in the world, have blackened the character of labor. What have you done for the women of the workers? This: in order to drive home your plea for minimum wages, for shorter hours,—just and inevitable, I

feel,—you have not been ashamed to create the impression that every daughter of the workers is a potential recruit, a probable recruit, for prostitution; and some of your most ardent friends of the working-class have gone so far as to say that they do not blame the working-girl who sells herself in order to purchase the comforts which society denies her. Pah!"

"Easily verifiable by statistics," said Dawson.

"Ladimer!" shouted Hartmann, looming up in the doorway: "is it your indention dot I perish of aboblexy on the open highway? Come!"

"Away with your nasty formulas of the slum-dweller! The father brutalized by toil; the bestial mother who is incapable of affection and service to her children; the boy who is destined to grow up a criminal; the girl who is destined to walk the streets! I doubt if for the sake of your good intentions it will ever be forgiven you that you have degraded the worker. And the horror of it is the magnificent opportunity you have missed!

"What an argument you might have made of it! You might have said, 'Look: in the face of exhausting labor, of continuous anxiety about livelihood, of the permanent menace of ill health and old age, see how strong the worker is, how cheery,

how capable of the elemental joys of parenthood, neighborliness, charity, unselfish devotion to the common interest!' You might have shown that, whereas business is a combat in which friend does not spare friend, and brother brother, the unionized worker will not hesitate to endure starvation in defense of his class interests. And then you should have said, 'If this treasure of fine manhood and clean womanhood can persist in spite of our iniquitous economic system, what would not the worker become if he received his due?' Instead of denying the dignity of labor you should have enhanced it, exaggerated it, and made it the title for greater claims and greater privileges. Everything, Dawson, can be forgiven except the sin against the spirit; against the spirit of the working masses whom you have reduced to slum-dwellers and candidates for the brothel. Pah!—Good-by, Manning. I will write you. Good-by, Margaret,"—and he bent his lips to hers. "Good-by, Dawson. Home, Hartmann."

"But will you not stay for luncheon?" said Mrs. Grimsby. The caressing tone and the fathomless smile in the dark eyes, made it not an invitation to luncheon, but a summons to flee with her to some

rocky fastness in the Caucasus there to lose his soul in dizzy pleasures amidst a Leon Bakst setting.

He forced himself to the exigencies of every day courtesy.

"Dear lady," he said, "I have intruded upon your presence and insulted your guests and you offer me luncheon. What I need is solitude to feel ashamed."

"On the contrary, it has been very stimulating," she said and offered him her hand. "If you must go—"

"I am pledged," and he pointed to Hartmann who was already out of the door. But now Manning was plucking at his elbow.

"You are not going home?" he cried pitifully. "You promised. I have been waiting all these days. And Margaret has the extra bedroom ready. You promised, Latimer. Only a week, if you insist; that much you must give me."

"But I have likewise promised Hartmann," Latimer wavered.

The three men were now out on the verandah, and found themselves near to the old lady in black, knitting in an angle of the bay window sheltered against the sun. Manning was ready for any weapon that offered itself.

"Mrs. Grimsby," he said, "I want to introduce Dr. Latimer."

The old lady bowed, smiled, and went on knitting.

"She wants you to sit down; she wants to talk to you," said Manning.

But as Latimer sank gratefully into a rocking chair, Hartmann, now fearing the worst, came forward.

"May I have a word with you, in brivate, Ladimer?"

They stepped aside.

"Are you coming with me or are you not? Speak oud," Hartmann hissed.

"How can I, without the rankest discourtesy to Mrs. Grimsby who has just requested me to sit near her? And Manning—"

"Mrs. Grimsby means a few minutes. But Manning how long?"

"He said a week."

"A week! Ladimer, I am now utterly gonvinced that you are a weagling and a fraud."

"You are quite sure of that?"

"Peyond question. Now if you want, you can tell me to go to the devil."

"I wish him no such good luck, Hartmann.

But as a matter of fact, professionally, don't you think I ought to prolong my holiday? Now that I am near to the city I grow afraid." And as Hartmann glared indignation, "I promise, I will look you up in town."

"Provided that you don't land in chail indefinitely," grumbled the other, but it was a hard task and a wide smile cleft the storm. "Take care of yourself, you Sybarite. It has been a great pleasure." He clapped Latimer hard on the shoulder and ran down the steps and into the car. But when he was out of sight, Manning, with a magnificent gesture of triumph, disappeared into the house.

CHAPTER XXII

AN INTERVIEW

OLD Mrs. Grimsby received Latimer's apologies for his brief absence with a nod and without interrupting operations on a half-finished sock. The play of the four steel needles in her gnarled fingers soothed Latimer into forgetfulness of Hartmann, of Manning, of remorse. The steel needles carried him fifty years back from Dawson and the Social Urge. How pleasant to lie back in the warmth of approaching noon and let these twinkling needles, and the resolute fingers, and the motherly eyes trained on distant vacancy, conjure away Dawson and Grimsby and the siren his wife,—everything. Incidentally how did old Mrs. Grimsby thrive in this ultra-modern gallery? Her's was obviously the older method of knitting, a lost art, he gathered from his observations in public conveyances, where women knitted painfully with two heavy needles—of celluloid, was it? or ivory possibly, to match the great silk knitting-bags with arabesques and Chinese medallions. It was a tedi-

ous labor and clumsy, this lifting of the yarn loop around the needle and pushing it into place, instead of the dive and swirl with which his own mother's needles used to capture the yarn and drive it tight, as Mrs. Grimsby was now doing, her eyes turned from her work and the sock-wall growing under his eyes as row after row of brick slid into place, instead of being lifted, stupidly, the modern way. That was because his mother, and Mrs. Grimsby, knitted with one eye on the kitchen and the other around the corner on the children at the chores, and half a mind on the old man's rheumatism and the other on the delayed letter from the eldest boy at college, and various minor incidents that enter into the knitting of gray socks and the building of a nation. Whereas now people do manage to listen to the Symphony Orchestra while knitting, but without lifting eyes from the work, and as for knitting and keeping an eye on the little girl at her piano scales—as his mother did with Harriet—and talking over the next church fair with the chairman of the Arrangements Committee, that was a lost art.

Would some such remarks interest Mrs. Grimsby, he wondered. If she made no move towards conversation it would be because it was his duty. But

he was tired of conversation, especially—particularly—that is—

He sat up with a start and wrenched his eyes open. No, he had not slept but it was a narrow escape. Had she noticed? Would she resent it? Not if one might judge from the free gesture with which her middle finger shut out and up, unwinding a stretch of yarn that immediately began to disappear under the maw of those four steel teeth. The sock had gained a half inch in height under the drive of those twinkling fingers, sinewy with labor—Manning had told him, inside, under young Grimsby's fire, something of the Grimsby chronicle from its beginnings in the Illinois prairie land shortly after the Civil War, and on to Wisconsin, and then south into Oklahoma, where the father died the year after oil bubbled up on the homestead and the sons set off variously, one for a position in a Chicago bank, one for the University and by way of the Department of Economics and factory legislation into Socialism and on and on, and on, and—

No! I will *not* go to sleep! The banking son was now with the Red Cross in France, *his* son in turn was in aviation, and Douglas here was outlining the reconstruction of society, with his

mother to look after his meals—he had been a delicate child and food had to be forced upon him, and the young generation went in for abominable foreign dishes, and young revolutionists rejected meat and corn-bread along with the capitalist system—all this routine Mrs. Grimsby's fingers had gone through, first hewing and washing and baking and cleaning and knitting; then baking only and knitting, and now knitting only,—but still socks.

What ought one to say to Mrs. Grimsby in sheer politeness? Latimer did not recall ever having seen any socks protruding from those enormous knitting bags in the Subway, though not only the sock itself, but the leg for which it was intended, and perhaps the soldierly owner of the leg, if it was not an oversized trooper, might conceivably be concealed in those mammoth bags with which devoted women plunged into the Black Hole of the Subway expresses during rush hours, thus affirming the ancient privilege of woman to lend a touch of the grotesque and the artificial to a motive essentially noble. No, what was being knitted in the public conveyances in New York was exclusively mufflers and sweaters, as if the Great War was being fought only from the waist up; whereas a heavy pair of gray socks, to a man in the slime of the trenches,

the frozen mud about the ankles, oozing in between sock and shoe, seeping right through the wool, biting at the bone—

He shivered and woke with a start to the heat of the sun and the tingle of a left leg gone entirely to sleep.

"I beg pardon," he said and sat up very straight and blushed, for Manning and Margaret had come out of the house and were watching him.

Mrs. Grimsby gave him a friendly nod. Latimer got up as gracefully as his numbed legs would permit.

"It has been a pleasure," he said. They shook hands in perfect understanding.

"Only the other day," said Latimer as the three strolled homewards, "an experience like this with Dawson would have left me in collapse. But now I feel fine. That shows how well I am."

"Yes?" said Manning, who had not been listening. "Then you think it's good for democracy when every animal in the zoo howls for his own belly?"

Latimer gaped at him.

"When you started off on your little junket last time," said Manning. "The Melting Pot, you will

remember. We are a menagerie. We are not like-minded, as one of the college professors points out, and the strength of a nation is in its like-mindedness. So where do we get off? If we need a war and a couple of million casualties to weld us into a nation, that ancient mixing kettle might as well go into discard. It isn't the little red school-house that will make us a united people. Mr. Hindenburg will do it for us."

"Is this a short-cut to your place?" said Latimer, who was too happy for debate.

"It is," said the hungry newspaper soul.

CHAPTER XXIII

IN ARCADY

HAVING telegraphed his wife and Harriet concerning his change of plan, together with assurance of his complete well-being, Latimer gave himself passionately to the poultry business.

The convalescence of soul which set in at Fairview, made notable progress under a Spartan routine adopted in spite of Manning's protests. He rose early,—that involved no particular merit, he reminded his host, when you have your sixtieth birthday behind you—and made the rounds, with his host, of the chicken houses and the runs. There were mornings, in fact, when he left Manning in bed, and put himself under orders to the hired man. Whether the gain from Latimer's labor made up for the loss of the hired man's efficiency, arising from the latter's extreme embarrassment in the presence of this unexplainable amateur, is a statistical problem which we may as well leave untouched.

Manning had objected at first to his visitor's

going in for the humbler duties connected with fowl culture. But Latimer insisted, and with complete sincerity, that it was precisely from such contact with the primitive materials and phenomena of the hen-yard that he drew cheer and the most glorious physical stimulus.

"I am an enlisted man, my dear fellow. Away with your commissioned etiquette. No swank for me. I shall learn the business from the ground up."

Only two privileges he claimed outside the ordinary routine of the hired agricultural laborer: a bath in the creek before the noon-day meal and a nap after. That was more than habit or recreation. It helped to keep him fit for another set of duties which he recognized he owed Manning, namely the companionship of his spirit for which the other longed so ardently in his own pilgrimage. Yet Latimer gave him of this higher service in moderation, and partly out of selfish motives. He would not sacrifice his new won freedom even for Manning. He would not abandon the sweat and rest and sunshine of the poultry-yards to plunge again into the jungle of a moral world from which he had escaped. It came hard at first to be sure. The veteran newspaper man had not lost the profes-

sional gift for eliciting words from mouths desperately determined not to be interviewed. Latimer was all the time walking into man-traps and pitfalls and *cul-de-sacs*, and before he knew it he would be knee-deep in controversy. What, for instance, more innocent than Manning's offer one day to join him for a swim in the creek?

They gasped with the first touch of the chill current. Latimer was not a swimmer and regularly practised immersion where he stood. But Manning breasted the tide with a splendid abandon born of the fact that it was just three strokes across to the opposite bank. Four times he traversed that mighty stream and came back to where Latimer was gingerly treading the sharp-pebbled bottom and whirling his arms, in the manner of Isadora Duncan.

"When I speak of the breakdown of the Melting Pot," said Manning, as he floated on his back and gave his face to the delicious warmth of the sun, "I am not thinking only of the Hunkers and the Pollocks and the Wops who have been paying dividends for the Hamburg-American Line. What about our good, old, native stock? I put in three years at Washington for the *Star*. And did I find in Congress any visible symptoms of that national

like-mindedness my friend the professor is pleading for? Nay, Pauline."

"I've had enough," said Latimer, crawling circumspectly to the shore and into the embrace of a heavy towel. "What was wrong with our Congressmen?"

"Oh, nothing except the heart and the head," said Manning, luxuriously closing his eyes in the sun. "Nothing except that it was each hick Representative for his own yap district, and each State for itself, and bargain and hugger-mugger. The gentlemen from Indiana scratched the gentlemen from Maine, and the gentlemen from Maine scratched the gentlemen from Indiana, and thus we were a nation."

"Log-rolling," said Latimer, rubbing away thoughtfully.

"Yes. A Congressman head foremost into the pork-barrel when he is not busy scrambling for votes, is not a pleasant sight, you'll agree."

"I don't at all agree," said Latimer, "but I like your honest and intelligent way of approaching a subject."

Manning stood up in the water and grunted.

"Thank you, Latimer. I am honest and I am intelligent, but every time I open my mouth I

drivel." He climbed ashore and began to dry himself mournfully.

"Not drivel, my dear fellow; but a certain lack of proportion you will admit. You have been too close to the facts to catch the inner meaning."

"That's true enough," said Manning, pensive with a towel over his arm like the Apollo Belvidere.

"Now what is there essentially wrong about a vote-hunting Congressman?" demanded Latimer.

"The business of keeping one's ear to the ground is not an æsthetic occupation, but it is useful, and the results are plainly what is aimed at in your democratic constitutions. A gas machine is not the noblest work of God, but it serves a very distinct purpose; and the more sensitive it is to pressure, the better it does its work. Have you ever thought of the ballot-box as your Melting Pot?"

"You mean as a similar bit of junk?" said Manning, with malice.

"As a cauldron," said Latimer. "Long before the blood of Hunker or Wop has begun to filter into the nation's veins, the Italian and Hungarian vote has become the pressure gauge of our political life responding to a new force. And when your Congressmen, elected by these 'votes,' get together

and roll logs and put through bills that represent a compromise of a dozen selfishnesses, you get something that is not quite as symmetrical, perhaps, as Plato would have made it, but it is that hodge-podge thing called life."

"That's downright immoral, my friend," said Manning, pulling at his sock viciously.

"It is only commonplace and wisdom," retorted Latimer, and stepped on a sharp stone. But when he had recovered:

"Where in history do you find a perfectly attuned nation? You recall what Gladstone said about our Constitution? The most perfect instrument ever struck off at white heat from the mind of man, or something of the sort. But what do your new historians say about the Constitution? A bundle of compromises in which one side got the best of the other, a compromise in which the landowners and money-changers and slave drivers put it over, to use one of your favorite phrases, Manning, on the sturdy, simple-hearted American yeoman. Once upon a time I was taught that the French Revolution was an inspired vision. Now it would appear that the Revolution was a bundle of makeshifts and accidents forced upon the amateur statesmen of France by a European coalition. You

are perhaps under the impression that Luther spoke for the unconscious soul of the German people?"

"Well, didn't he?"

"The new histories say that Luther was playing the game of a couple of thousand princes and gentry who were hungry for church lands."

"Look here," Manning showed real concern, "we'd better hurry up and find the answer right away, or some fellow from the Rockefeller Institute will pull a new historical theory on us and we'll have to start all over again."

"I only ask you," said Latimer, "to imagine what must have been the log-rolling at Nicaea in the year 325 A.D., where corner bargains and steam-rollers put through the formulas for which millions gave their lives and to which millions gave their faith, through the centuries. Not to speak of the greatest log-rolling arrangement of all, upon which society has been built for the last several thousand years."

"Namely, to wit?" said Manning. He had climbed into his clothes and was now sitting on the ground busy with his shoelaces.

"Marriage, of course; which the poets and the creeds describe as a perfect and instantaneous fusion, but which the sober wisdom of the ages re-

gards as a log-rolling compact between the member from Adamsville and the member from Evesham. But why argue? I look forward with confidence to an indeterminate future in which man, on his little earth, will go log-rolling through space."

For as much as a minute Manning sat there with his left shoe in his hand thinking it over. Then he shook his head, plunked the shoe down beside him, and returned to the charge.

"I don't see it. I don't want to see it. I refuse to think of America as the dead centre between Maine and California and Georgia pulling each for itself and our old friend take the hindmost. There must be something more than mechanics in it. There is a soul somewhere that is bigger than those damnable local interests. Think of California going off on a Japanese bat every three years and giving us all nervous prostration. Think of Georgia burning a dozen men at the stake every other year and making America a stink in the nostrils of the world. Does California ever stop to think of the other forty-seven States. Does Georgia?"

"But my dear fellow," shouted Latimer. "You have gone and eaten up your own argument."

"I am not arguing. I take my exercise some

other way," said Manning gloomily. "What I am trying to get at is the truth."

Latimer crowed in triumph.

"You have confessed that it isn't always log-rolling among us. That Maine will frequently cry out upon California for her Yellow Peril and upon Georgia for her negro massacres."

"Sure," said Manning. "And Georgia and California will turn around and invite Maine to go home and attend to her own bootleggers and blind-tigers. It's a sweet arrangement by which we stand up as each other's keeper."

"Which is quite as it should be," cried Latimer. "It is right and necessary that Georgia and California and Maine should call each other to order. Just as it is right that America should denounce Jew-baiting in Russia and that Russia should denounce Law and Order assassination in Arizona copper mines. Mind you, Manning, I am not saying that the Russian pogroms are an answer to Arizona pogroms. But it is nonsense to say, as you hear people say all the time, that Maine must not speak out against murder because she drinks liquor on the sly, and Georgia must not call California to her senses because Georgia has her own negro weaknesses. By pointing the finger of scorn

at each other we have climbed up from the brute state. Our human history, you'll recall, began with the appearance of a sense of shame; in Eden. If we all waited to examine the cleanliness of our hearts before criticising our neighbors, where would we be?"

"But, Latimer, there is something about being without sin before casting stones."

"Suppose there is."

"And something about the beam in your own eye. Pretty good authority, you know."

"I regard that doctrine as humanly unsound," said Latimer gravely.

"What!" The inherent, if submerged piety, of all veteran newspapermen was plainly shocked.

"I pay tribute to the Man in the divine Author of the maxims you have cited," said Latimer, "by pointing out that he was occasionally subject to error."

As the days passed, Latimer grew more wary. Manning had to be content with snatches of talk during business hours, at meals, only occasionally at dish-washing.

This task had been alleviated by a notable increase in Margaret's staff of assistants. Winifred

came in for supper every other day. Polly and Dawson dropped in after supper to help out. The casualties among the chinaware rose surprisingly little, all things considered. Dawson especially revealed himself a master with the towel, and Latimer was soon forced to a very radical revision in his attitude to the effeminate young anarchist. Dawson had constructive genius, of that there was no doubt. His labor-saving innovations in the handling of wet dishes were nothing short of marvelous.

After supper they sat on the porch and talked, the young people grouped on the steps, the seniors in rocking chairs. This was when Manning got his heaviest profit out of his new hired man. It was, as a rule, quiet talk; Latimer had learned how to take care of himself. At the first sign of a rising temperature, he fled to trivialities or to impersonal comment. Thus, one night when the girls' laughter testified repeatedly to Dawson's being in good form:

"I have done this young man a great injustice; he has intelligence and humor; his pose I assume is part of the radical journalist's trade mark. Frivolous he is not."

"Frivolous?" said Manning. "There is stuff in the young man. There are enough ideas bob-

bing up behind that Futurist mustache right now to keep a college president running at top speed for a whole semester. He is always hanging round for an opportunity to engage your humble servant in intellectual conversation. When I am not around, Margaret will do. He knows every article in the kitchen by its first name."

"To be sure," said Latimer.

Nine o'clock he would go to bed. Sleep came with wings of down to the accompaniment of pleasant sounds from the porch, Dawson's clipt singsong, Manning's heavier boom, Winifred and Margaret laughing at Dawson, at Manning, at Polly, everything, nothing—

One morning Manning found him motionless on an empty crate in the principal chicken gallery, his arms folded, the smile of perfect peace on his lips, his eyes dreamily fixed on Manning's champion Plymouth Rock enthroned on her nest. For the space of five minutes Manning watched him from outside the shed, his heart leaping to the wild hope that at last the old intellectual appetites were stirring in the breast of this day-laborer. Latimer heard him move and turned on him that smile of measureless beatitude.

"Tell me the worst," said Manning.

"I have sat here for nearly half an hour, and my mind has been the perfect blank which is the sign of supreme well-being," said Latimer. "I have escaped, Manning. I can look without thinking. Do you understand what that means? Only a few days ago I should have found it impossible to confront the humblest of God's creatures without subjecting her to the torture of my own analysis. To-day I can look a hen in the face without imputing to her motives, meaning, or ultimate purpose. It's like looking at the sea. For most of us sickly intellectuals it has become a duty not to look out across the breakers without registering ideas, emotions. But I remember a classmate of mine—you know how long ago that was—Johnson, of Viking blood. He would lie on his back on the sands between breakfast and luncheon and look at the sea, when he was not watching the clouds. I would ask Johnson what was it he saw out there in the course of a morning's observation, and he would say, the color of the water and the sky. I understand it now. For the last fifteen minutes the hen and I have been in perfect spiritual communion."

"I shall have to charge sanitarium prices," said Manning.

"But I do my work pretty well, don't I?"

"At chopping green feed I have yet to see you equal, Latimer."

"And not once in the last three days, Manning, have I thought of myself as Count Tolstoy. My conversion ought to make what I have heard you newspapermen call a human interest story."

"How?"

"Well, what has been going on in my soul."

"But what makes you think that a human interest story has anything to do with the soul, Latimer?"

"By definition. What else is a human interest story in the papers?"

"It's a story about a chicken with three legs and a couple of heads," said Manning; "or about a dog that plays mother to a litter of kittens; or about an automobile that skids, climbs trees, and comes down on the other side intact and full of red apples. But under no circumstances, Latimer, is there anything human in a human interest story. Remember that when you are next in the company of newspapermen, lest they turn upon you with ribald laughter. But what I was going to say was this: If it is right that every nation should point the finger of scorn at every other nation, as you claim—"

"When did I say that?"

"Last Friday, out there at the swimming hole. Of course three days have elapsed and it may no longer be true."

"Oh, no," said Latimer. "If I said it—and I take your word for it—I'll stick to it."

"Well, then, in that case, is a man to take everything that is said about his country, by the frank and intelligent foreigner, lying down? I have had candid German friends—before the war—sit down and prove to me in sixteen paragraphs and forty-six sub-sections, that our boasted American democracy and liberty are about on a plane with the civilization of Senegambia, but not quite up to the level of Kamchatka. And I can't answer them on points because the intelligent foreigner always carries about his person an average of twenty pounds of government statistics."

"There are no intelligent foreigners, Manning, so I shouldn't worry," said Latimer. "There are people, as you said, with newspaper clippings all over their clothes; so they think they know all about America. But we know a trick that is better than their whole bag of statistical effluvia. We have faith—"

"Henry," said a woman's voice from outside the shed. He looked up and saw Harriet, in a blue

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turban with white gloves and parasol. Behind in the middle distance, stood Nicholas Runkle the conventional heavy worsted, and on his face a bitter little smile which to Latimer said plainly Runkle did not believe the Plymouth Rock on nest was genuine.

Behind her,
Runkle, in
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CHAPTER XXIV

DOMESTIC

THIS was the first thought. The next came with a sudden wrench of unreasoning, agonizing panic and remorse. He ran to meet his sister.

"Mary? She is well?"

"Perfectly," said Harriet, and bent forward to kiss him decisively on the cheek. "I hear from her every other day."

"I am under orders not to write, you know." He was still penitent.

"You've done well, Henry. Still, I thought Mary would like to know. This, I suppose, is Mr. Manning. My only train back is at 2.30."

"They've been taking trains off," said Runkle. His voice reeked with ominous implications. It was less a statement of fact than the revelation of a conspiracy. Trains were disappearing from the O. and W. schedule. Whether it was pro-Germans, or Carranza, or Wall Street, Runkle left it to your own intelligence.

"I suppose the coal has to be saved some-

how," said Harriet. "Please put down the box, Nicholas." She indicated a large parcel which Runkle had under his arm.

Nicholas set down the box and smiled knowingly in the direction of the pump. "They've got half a million tons of coal hid away up-State," he remarked to the pump.

Latimer glared at him, straightened up, and laughed.

"Oh, come now, Nicholas, do you know how big a pile half a million tons of coal would make? You can't hide that in the cellar, you know."

"They've done worse things," said Runkle.

"I don't see that this gets us anywhere," said Harriet. "Since I am supposed to stay over for lunch I imagine we might be going around to the house."

Manning hastened to apologize for lax hospitality and led the way. Margaret was away in the Ford, on her regular delivery route, with a crate of eggs and Dawson. The meal was served by Polly who came under the scrutiny of Harriet's expert eye and received a decent passing mark. As soon as might be, Manning made occasion to leave her brother and sister to themselves. Runkle was detailed to assist Polly in the kitchen.

But when he was alone with Harriet on the porch, our hero caught the first ache of longing for home and kin since he had left Fairview. A wave of tenderness swept him close to this strong, capable sister, whom, normally, he would visit at three-year intervals. He wanted to believe it was not merely at his wife's request that Harriet had taken a day off from the business of running the Methodist church and the Red Cross in Williamsport and its environs. He liked to think it had been no sacrifice for Harriet.

"You are looking very well, indeed," she told him. "You smoke very little, I see, and you don't fidget."

"I am twenty years younger, Harriet, and I am glad of life every minute of the day. For Mary's sake I rejoice. I have given up carrying the burden of the world on my shoulders. I have learned to throw myself a bit upon the world in turn. I sleep extremely well. I still lose my temper on occasion, but it passes easily, and with no after effects. In all honesty I can say my disposition is very much better. It is a week since I have quarreled with anybody."

"And the war?"

"I have not forgotten it. Perhaps it is still

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with me more than is quite good for me, but there are no miraculous cures. I think, perhaps I understand the war better, and what I don't am willing to take on trust. As I see it now trouble with me in town was that I looked at the world through an opera-glass, as if I were the spectator, for whom the whole show was set. The eye-strain gave me a headache. I have learned to look at smaller and nearer things and with a narrower vision, and it's been good for me."

"That's something to be thankful for," she said. "Mary sent up a parcel for you and I have brought the things down. You have not been running short of underwear?"

He reflected.

"No. I believe I am well provided for. If anything, I have been extravagant. I made purchases at Fairview and again at Greensborough; and this reminds me that there should be a bundle of laundry waiting for me at the hotel in Fairview."

"You will give me the receipt and address before I go and I'll have them send it by parcel post."

"That's kind of you, Harriet."

"It was careless of you, Henry; though Mary warned me that something of the sort would

bound to happen. The things she sent are middle-heavies."

"I wear them all the year round."

"Well, if you are used to that, so much the better; though at your age I think people should change sometime around Thanksgiving."

"The problem has been with socks rather," he said. "It began right at Williamsport. Anything but silk or lisle is very difficult to find in these rural neighborhoods. But I have managed. What I do need, as a matter of fact, is a pair of bed-room slippers. If I so much as put my toes to the floor, on the warmest night, I catch cold."

"You used to do that fifty years ago," she laughed. "I remember Mother saying, 'Henry's sneezing again.' You always left your slippers in the clothes closet and hunted for them in the morning barefoot."

"Harriet," he said, leaning forward and putting his hand on the back of hers, "are you going to stay forever at Williamsport? Why don't you come down to the city to live? You know how pleased Mary would be."

"Nonsense," she said, but did not withdraw her hand. "I have lived in the old house as long as I can remember, and when I can no longer take care

of myself, Nicholas and Selma will look after me. The food here is good?"

"Excellent. Manning, you know, is only lately from the city. For breakfast I take an egg, coffee bread, and jam, and sometimes a dish of cereal."

"Uncooked, of course," she sneered.

"Yes. Wheat Crumbs. Our heavy meal is at mid-day. Sometimes I over-indulge in pie, but always have a nap afterwards. Supper is cold meat, or eggs, or most often cheese and tea; and only one cigarette."

"It might be a good deal worse," said Harriet. "And before you go to bed you should rinse your mouth and throat with bicarbonate of soda."

"I am afraid I have omitted that."

"There's half a pound of it in the box," she said, getting to her feet. "I will let Mary know. How long do you plan to stay?"

"Not more than a week. Now that I have seen you I am homesick. But I will take you in on my way back."

"I shall be happy to have you, Henry." She kissed him with her natural bright efficiency and turning into the house called for Nicholas. There was no response.

"He would still be in the kitchen," said Latimer.

and showed the way through the dining-room. A second time Harriet summoned her esquire without result. They peered in through the kitchen door.

Nicholas was on the edge of his chair, an idle towel beteen his knees—the dishes were dried and stacked up on the table—listening wide-eyed, open-mouthed, with all the repressed faith of a lifetime breaking through the thick crust of suspicion, to Polly who was sweeping up.

"That is the comfort of it, Mr. Runkle," she was saying. "That one feels one is something more than a bit of driftwood tossed around by chance; that there is a reason for one's being what you are, and where you are. It is progression, from circle to circle, in a great eternal spiral, right from the beginning of things. There is a reason for everything, Mr. Runkle."

"Ay," said Nicholas. "I always believed that."

"Else how are you going to explain so many things that one can't explain?" said Polly. "Like dreams. Or when you feel certain that you have experienced something before, far back, long before one came to earth. Now that is only the memory of existence in an earlier plane. It's a comfort to feel the splendid justice of things. Everything which befalls you is what you have earned

in the past. I don't know how you feel about it, Mr. Runkle, but it seems to me one can never be unhappy if you know it is all justice, and there is always another chance in the endless winding of the spiral."

"I have a book about it up at home," said Nicholas. "It's from the ancient Sanskript. It shows how they have gone ahead and printed fraudulent translations from the ancient Sanskript and pretended it was a true translation. And they made it from a forged copy. The real secret is hid away in a monastery up in the Himalaysian mountains where the priests teach it—"

"Nicholas," said Harriet.

CHAPTER XXV

THE MOTHER

TWINGES and shooting-pains of homesickness, recurring with intensified frequency during the next few days, gave Latimer warning that the end of his holiday was in sight. His zest for the routine of the barnyard diminished. Doubts whether he was, after all, earning his keep with the Mannings beset him. Why pretend that it was anything but make-believe? Down there was a great, booming city where five million people, more or less, went to work in the morning and came home tired at night, and read their vivid throbbing newspapers going and coming; and here was a strong man denying the world in a lotus garden. He began to feel parasitic. Winifred and Polly had said good-by and trudged off citywards, with the intention of jumping on a train a few days further down, and Latimer felt more than ever in a backwash.

When he told Manning that his time had come, it was in a tone that permitted no discussion.

Would he come back later, in the fall perhaps,

when they could see more of each other, mourned his host.

He would.

And how about declaring to-morrow a holiday, just for the three, Latimer, Manning, and Margaret—it would be necessary to put Dawson aside for the day, gently but firmly—with luncheon somewhere in the woods, and back in time for Latimer's nap, and plenty of time for his eight o'clock train to New York?

An excellent idea; but this afternoon Latimer wanted to himself, for just one more summary and review of a land which had been so kind to him. He might return for supper or he might not, but he would be back surely for a final night of Manning's hospitality.

"Just one moment," said Manning, as they shook hands at the gate. "That intelligent and candid foreigner,—"

"Which one?" Latimer turned about and saw no one.

"Yesterday; the man who comes around punching holes in your national pride."

"Oh! Well, don't let him worry you, my dear Manning. I've had that kind of pest fling his

damned newspaper clippings at me; all about the number of negroes we lynch, and the number of people we kill on the railways, and how Congress has less power than the Reichstag, and how we have no personal liberty, and how we send men to death by judicial procedure."

"That's the fellow," cried Manning. "What's one to say? He has the facts."

"Oh, damn his mangy little facts," shouted Latimer. "Do they add up America? And if they do, what is he doing here? What are a hundred million people doing here? America has less freedom than Germany, but when a Russian revolutionist or a Chinese revolutionist or a Hindu or a Turk or Siamese gets the native police after him he does not head for Berlin but for New York. America is the Moloch of capitalism; she sends the bodies of millions through her mills and mines, but it's from America that hundreds of millions of treasure pour out to keep alive the Poles and Czechs and Slovaks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Lithuanians, Ukrainians— But I will not let you disturb my last holiday in the hills. Good-by."

He took the road as it ran past the house, away from the highway and across the creek towards the hills through a country new to him. It carried him

three miles—which is to say exactly an hour—in a steady climb, veered to the north along the mountain side and bent down hill again towards the main road. So at least the county map would have shown; but Latimer was impervious to direction or topography. He was blissfully occupied in thinking of nothing whatever. He was not even conscious of how closely he was repeating Winifred's methods in the open. He stopped to listen to noises in the trees. He peered over fences. He pried into bushes and behind rocks. He stooped gravely to diagnose flat stones in the road which had nothing to distinguish them from their fellows. His way ran through a thinly occupied region, and just two farmer's wagons in the course of that five mile stretch ventured to intrude.

But then who would that be, sprawling there under an ancient apple tree in the pasture a few steps from the road, one great stretch of thin leg fulcrumed and swinging on the knee cap of the other, one hand gesticulating to the firmament, and a voice declaiming, alternately, with fervor, with snap, with irony, with gentle appeal? Latimer stared and listened. That voice, those legs,—

“Perkins!” he shouted.

The flamboyant leg swung aside from its pivot,

one hand shot out and swept up a sheaf of manuscript from the ground, and with a whirl of pistons, rods, cogs, and valves, which were the limbs of Perkins, the dramatist stood erect, gazed, wondered, and dashed forward; and on those melancholy Danish features the first flush of shame gave way to a glow of delighted recognition.

"Dr. Latimer! I was hoping it might happen."

They gazed into each other's eyes.

"You were rehearsing," scoffed Latimer with radiant affection.

Perkins blushed.

"We've got Villa down and out, unconditional surrender," he said. "Day after to-morrow we pack up for town. I've been giving myself a vacation."

"But not a change of scene, I hope," and Latimer crowed with appreciation of his own wit. "Then you will walk a bit with me? I go home to-morrow."

Perkins shoved the manuscript into his pocket and fell into stride.

"Perhaps you will even read me a page or two of the play?"

"Oh, will I!" said Perkins.

Trimmed from five acts and fourteen characters

to three acts and nine characters, the play yet took an hour and a half in the reading—needless to say Latimer had it running a year on Broadway before putting it on the road—and they were a good half dozen miles from the Mannings, whither Perkins announced his intention of escorting him, but obviously not in time for supper. Now enthusiasm always made Latimer hungry and he had eaten moderately at noon in preparation for his afternoon's walk.

"There's a little place half a mile down the automobile road," said Perkins. "I have had sandwiches there, and that's about all I can vouch for."

"I am really not thinking of food, but of a brief rest and talk," Latimer lied.

It was an old house standing back from the highway, but an open booth had been flung out close to the road to catch the transient trade in sarsaparilla and cheese sandwiches. The professional country-inn touch had been attempted in a muster of green-painted tables and chairs on the lawn, grouped around a lofty flagpole. Signs nailed up against the trees offered ice-cream and home-made candy. Well-groomed Wyandottes and Rhode Island Reds sauntered among the tables and submitted

to comment. There was an aspect of modest prosperity that pleased the sybarite in Latimer.

Details are lacking as to the nature of the repast which our travelers ordered. It was simple enough, but gave Latimer occasion to wonder at what mysterious hour of the day Perkins did take sustenance. He recalled that in Westville the playwright had told him he never ate luncheon, and now Perkins asserted that he always ate a very light supper. Could it be part of the dramatist's trade, Latimer conjectured; at least while waiting for a Broadway production?

They stated their requirements to the mistress of the house. Considering how short was the list, it was odd that they had to specify every article twice, and then she came back to reassure herself whether it was cheese or ham they wanted. They had found her sitting quietly in the little booth, with her hands clasped on the counter before her. She had watched them turn in from the road, pick out their table, dispose themselves in comfort and look about for attendance, without bestirring herself. Latimer wondered whether she had seen them at all, so quick was the start with which she became aware of their presence. It was a flash of energy which sank again, we have already noticed, to

listlessness as she took their order. Or could it be ill-health, thought Latimer. Obviously not. He saw a rugged, deep-chested woman of not more than forty. Eyes dark, soft, intelligent, Latimer noted further; mouth, broad and with capacities for humor; nose, high-bridged, masterful, sensitive. A touch of foreign blood there might be, but the base was good native stock. Latimer felt proud of his countrywoman, and wondered.

"Shall I be longing for all this, Perkins, to-morrow when the city gets me?" He spoke dreamily, sweeping a lazy hand over the kindly scene. Cool tongues of shadow were creeping forward across the lawn. The cleanly white of the old house took on sharper edges against the deepening green of the ground. The flag on its absurdly tall pole flapped tentatively in the falling breeze. Wyandotte and Rhode Island Red, having strutted their brief day across the stage, drifted away to rest and duty. From the rear of the house, two sturdy forms in rompers, twins even at that distance, came on hand in hand, paused a moment in the deep centre, to examine and count the audience and disappeared into the barn, right. From the barn, leading the remonstrant twins by the hand, speedily came a lad of thirteen, with a fishing pole

over his shoulder. He gave the visitors one hurried glance, and vanished into the house. From the house again issued a tall bearded man in overalls, stopped to examine the audience, and turned back.

"It's like a Max Reinhardt shadow-picture," said Perkins.

A heavy automobile, its sole occupant in the driver's seat, went hurtling by.

"This would be your impetuous friend Mr. Busby," said Latimer; but even that bloated charioteer, on the wings of the thunder, could not break the soft peace around them and in their souls.

The tall man reappeared from the kitchen, this time with a tray. As he moved across the lawn it might have been a Max Reinhardt priest approaching the footlights with a mystic salver. However it was the sandwiches, the milk, and the plate of honey in the comb they were expecting. And the servitor, on close inspection, was not at all Oriental or sinister, but a blue-eyed up-state New Yorker, with the soft, almost artist gentleness of good, old blood thinned with the generations. At a safe guess he was twenty years older than his wife.

Having put down the tray before them, the host sat down with a courtesy that was more of the gentleman at his own fireside than the commercial affability of the modern inn-keeper. The rest of the order, he explained to Perkins, whom he recognized, would be forthcoming immediately. In the meanwhile he hoped they had had a pleasant walk.

They had, indeed, Latimer hastened to tell him, and the best part of it was this charming opportunity for rest and entertainment at the day's end. How remote was this little haven from the booming world; from the war for instance.

The host nodded. Would the war last much longer, did they think?

Latimer waved aside any pretence to special knowledge. His eyes were on the woman who now appeared with another tray, followed by the twins, adventuring plainly without her knowledge. Only as she was setting down butter and bread before the guests did she grow aware of the junior detachment behind her. She pounced upon the two, struck simultaneously with both palms and good aim and control, and pushed them roughly from her.

"Go right back, the both of you," she shouted,

and compelled a disorderly retreat. It was a false note in the idyllic scene for our travelers. It was not true to character, either, or the kindly face of the woman spoke for nothing. They sought escape from embarrassment in their sandwiches; an occupation to which their hosts immediately left them, with a friendly "Good-night" from the man.

Perkins went through his food with phenomenal speed. He was draining his glass of milk when the lad of the fishing pole sauntered out from the house on his way to the barn once more. Perkins whistled and snapped his fingers. The boy turned, reassured himself that he was the one wanted, and came near.

"Yes, sir?"

"That's a mighty fine pole for a person of your age," said Perkins. The boy's hand gripped on the rod with pride and the zest of possession.

"That was brother Bob's, sir. It's mine now. He gave it to me for keeps."

"I see; and where's brother Bob?"

The lad straightened up.

"Went off to camp, this morning, sir; he's enlisted. And I'm to have his room, all to myself."

"You'd better take this," said Perkins, fishing in his pocket. "Next time you write to Bob send

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him a pipe and half a pound of straight cut, from me."

"Thank you, sir," and he resumed his errand to the barn.

It was dark on the lawn when they paid their small account and that was why, presumably, the woman twice gave them more change out of their dollar bill than they were entitled to.

"And now for a good hour and a half in the dark," cried Perkins briskly.

CHAPTER XXVI

CAUTION

(AT this point the well-informed reader, provided he has adventured thus far, will take the thickness of pages to the end of this book between thumb and index finger, and say, "How now, is it not about here that we must expect the great fistic tourney, the Homeric clash of bone and flesh upon bone and flesh, the play of lunge and smash and upper-cut without which any romance of the open road is but a mockery?"

Even so. If only the well-informed reader had waited till the next page!)

CHAPTER XXVII

THE BATTLE

"TIRED?" said Perkins after a while.

"A little," said Latimer. "When I get home I will have made how many miles?"

There was still light enough for Perkins to pull out his road-map and retrace the route Latimer had covered that afternoon. The distances on that large-scale map were measured in inches to the mile, but Latimer had the pride as if each of those inches were a couple of hundred miles right across darkest Africa.

"We'll get to Manning's by nine?"

"No trouble at all," said Perkins, and his face went white as he threw himself upon Latimer, whirled him off the road and sent him staggering half a dozen feet against a stile. Latimer's back came sharp against the rail and he would have gone over if Perkins, following up his thrust with a leap, had not reached his side and thrown his arm around the older man's shoulder. He was shaking with fright and rage.

"The dirty scoundrel!" he cried, "the filthy scoundrel!"

Fifty yards down the road a large automobile was slackening up to the grinding of brakes.

"What is it?" said Latimer, and his legs grew very weak under him.

"He tried to run us down. He was on the wrong side of the road. He didn't give us the horn. The man was up to murder."

"That? That?" said Latimer pointing to the automobile which had now come to a standstill. "I heard a noise, but it blended,—confused,—your sudden assault—Perkins—"

"It's all right, sir," said Perkins and wiped his forehead. "You were facing the wrong way; it was lucky I happened to look up."

"A madman," said Latimer.

"Mad or drunk; it's that beast Busby," said Perkins and started suddenly for the car. The automobile had come to a stop and the driver, turning in his seat, was merrily waving his hand at the men whose lives he had played with.

"Perkins, it's unbelievable—No one would be capable of deliberate—"

Perkins was sprinting for the automobile where Busby, after expressing his joy, had applied him-

self to the levers. The car began to move forward.

"You filthy coward," yelled Perkins, as the car began to glide forward. The tears were in his eyes. "Come back," he screamed.

Busby turned in his seat and twiddled his fingers, and Perkins suddenly stooped to the road. Busby pulled back his hand in haste, crouched over his wheel, and made an effort to send the car zigzagging across the road. He was not quite in time. A great chunk of rock from Perkins' hand, took the driver in the side of the head and went crashing through the windshield. A warm stream of blood ran down the man's face and he howled. The car which he had begun to manœuvre when he saw the missile coming, now danced back and forth across the road of its own will. It shot half-way up a sand slope and remained upright, and Busby, bare-headed, his right cheek wet and scarlet, leaped out of the car and came running back.

Not until Latimer saw Busby's six feet of flesh hurling itself up the road towards Perkins did he emerge from the haze into which that mighty thrust had sent him. He sprang up the embankment to where Perkins stood poised for the attack, quivering with a hot wrath that drew a thin film of red

across the iris. Latimer's heart tightened at the pitiful disproportion between the lankness of Perkins and the massive hulk which was descending upon them; a good deal of it gristle and bad wind to be sure, thought Latimer, but with the suggestion, in those heavy shoulders and the pilaster neck, of more power than Latimer could have wished to see.

He threw his arm about his friend's shoulder.

"You will not fight, I implore you. You have amply repaid him for his villainous attempt."

"He evidently believes there is something more coming to him," said Perkins, staring in front of him and the corners of his mouth twitching. The enemy was only twenty feet away, and instinctive prudence counseled Busby to slacken his pace and be more thrifty of his breath; but his rage floated before him.

"You dirty little shrimp, I'll smash you for that," he bellowed. "I'll spoil your little holiday trip for you."

He came on, though with growing caution, and Perkins stepped forward to meet him.

Latimer threw himself between the two.

"I forbid this encounter. Enough blood has been shed. Perkins—"

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"If he has had enough, let him say so," said Perkins with a steady eye on the enemy. "I guess we are about even," and he grinned.

Latimer's allusion to blood was unfortunate. It intensified Busby's sense of outraged pity for his own hurts, and the Perkins grin whipped him into fury.

He howled at Latimer.

"Keep out of this, you there; it's none of your concern!"

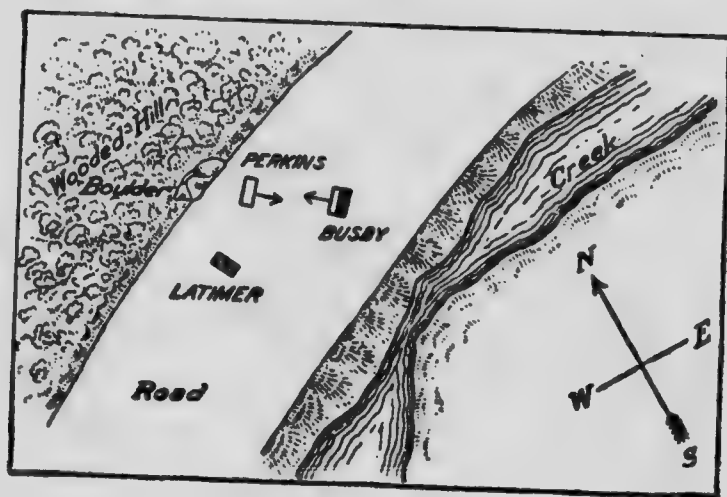
The combatants edged away from Latimer so as to leave him outside the line of fire and slipped nearer to each other. Busby crouched from his formidable shoulders. His enormous arms were thrust before him and shuttled back and forth. But Latimer followed and sprang between the two men.

"I will not have this," he cried.

"Get out of the way, you old fool," shouted Busby and swept his left arm up and out, catching Latimer under the chin and hurling him back towards the further edge of the road. The blow across his throat sent two needles of pain through Latimer's temples. His knees shook under him, and gasping for breath he staggered back to the fence and leaned heavily against it. He groaned, not in pain, or in fear for himself, but because it

was now too late to avert calamity. For simultaneously with Busby's blow, Perkins cried out and sprang forward.

"Oh, you swine," he spat out. Leaping to one side he drove his knuckles into Busby's head a little above the ear, a little below the gap made by his own missile. Busby countered with his left arm, not fast enough to avert the stroke, but in time to crash his fist into Perkins's shoulder. The impact sent Perkins spinning half way around, and immediately the two were facing each other in the middle of the road and their backs to the sides of the road. Behind Busby was the fence guarding the edge of the embankment. Behind Perkins was the steep side of the hill, heavily wooded and sown with great boulders. Thus:



The present chronicler is aware that in all similar encounters in romantic fiction, between a pair so oddly matched as Perkins and Busby, there is always but one outcome. The slim, clean-living young man has it always his own way—after the conventional few minutes of suspense—against the superior mass of ill-conditioned fat and bad lung power handicapped by a lack of the subtler tricks of the pugilist's art. But as it happens the general rule held true, in the present instance, neither for Perkins who had never gone in for the study and practice of boxing, nor yet for Busby whose life must have been much more sober than is customary in such crises in imaginative literature.

A second time Perkins succeeded in getting home to Busby's head—he was concentrating on that raw wound over the ear—and a second time, by ducking, he saved his own face from punishment, at the cost of a smashing blow on the left shoulder. He clenched his teeth in a pain so exquisite that it seemed certain his shoulder-bone had given way. He fainted with his left to find out if it was as bad as that, and the pain was forgotten in the sense of relief that he could still swing his arm. Nevertheless it was plain that he could not afford to stand and exchange blow for blow. He would be

worn out in no time. He began to give ground very slowly at first, counter attacking repeatedly with threats for the jaw and the temple, but retreating nevertheless. A swift glance over his shoulder showed that he was less than a yard from the hillside. Directly behind him was a great mass of granite which in the course of years had racked and torn its way down the slope to the edge of the road. Perkins thought rapidly.

That backward glance brought a spasm of agony to Latimer's heart. Perkins was weakening. Another minute or two and he would be pinned against the boulder with Busby's brute arms pounding his flesh against it. Latimer pressed his palms against his cheeks and the sweat came out on his forehead. Yet there was no way out. In the midst of his agony a queer sense of justice beset him. With all his passionate hatred for the scoundrel that had put them in peril of their lives and was now preparing to deliver bitter punishment for their reprisal, Latimer could not forget that the battle was partly of Perkins's own choosing. It could have been avoided by prudence. Now the price must be paid. How he despised himself for that unmanly sense of justice!

"One side, one side, jump Perkins!" he shouted.

Perkins was now only inches from the rock. He was losing his freedom of manœuver. He jumped, but not to one side. He sprang straight at Busby and drove his fist into that broad expanse of face. Busby took the blow without flinching, struck out with both arms, once against that weakened left shoulder, once against the chest, and as Perkins reeled back he plunged forward for the final blow.

Only now did Perkins leap to one side, and Busby, hurtling on, dived full force with both fists and lowered head into the boulder. He stood fixed there a moment and sank to his knees in a ridiculous and gruesome attitude of prayer. With a violent effort he whirled half around and fell, part reclining, to the ground, his shoulder on the rock, his arms limp at his sides, his eyes closed.

Latimer was at Perkins's side with his arms about him.

"Thank God, thank God; and be done." He was sobbing, but Perkins stood still, the pain in his shoulder twisting his lips. He looked down at Busby.

"Had enough?" he said.

"It was a trick, damn you," gasped the big man.
"Give me another chance and I'll show you."

"Perkins, it is enough; let us be gone," pleaded Latimer.

"I won't run, Latimer," said Perkins, and the other began to understand something of that will which had fought its way through years of man-handled manuscript to a Broadway production. "This has got to be seen through. Please stand back."

Busby was now on his feet and again on the charge. He had got back his breath and his wits and he now set himself to wear out his opponent. He took blows on his arms and torso and gave them back, a traffic in which he was bound to profit. And Latimer, standing behind Perkins, as the latter dodged and ducked, could only groan at his friend's mistaken chivalry. Perkins was tiring fast. He had gone as usual without his luncheon. He had walked the greater part of the day. His repast at the roadside booth had been of the slightest. He was white now from the mat of his lank hair to his chin, and the pain in his shoulder was like a hot iron on the bare nerves. They were circling about in a daze, hitting out blindly, neglecting to take advantage of open guards. Perkins found himself longing for the decisive blow, one way or the other, if only this dreadful ache and weariness

should end. But this was cowardice, and he cast the thought from him in a sudden onset of devouring hatred for the enemy. He must try strategy again, and this time there would be no mistaken mercy. He would—

"Look out, you old man there!" shouted Busby, and Perkins turned his head to see what this new peril to Latimer might be that drew a warning from the enemy. But Latimer was behind him, quite safe, as utterly puzzled by the shout of warning as Perkins himself. Then it must be a ruse, flashed across Perkins, an ignoble trick—and a great blow descended on the side of his head. He crumpled to the ground, and fell back, his head striking against the hard-flints protruding from the worn macadam. His eyes closed.

Latimer had sprung forward too late to save him from the fall. He could think now of nothing else but to plump down there in the road and lift Perkins's head into his lap, bending over him, watching for a sign of returning breath. The man lay still. Only his chest showed the slightest heave, and this, to Latimer in his state of tortured fear, was but the agony that preceded the end of all things. Busby, standing over his victim, cleansed suddenly from his blood-lust, was moved to a

rough compassion,—to remorse perhaps, by the pain and terror in the old man's eyes. He stooped over Perkins and laid his ear to his chest.

"He's all right, don't you worry," he announced. "I'll fetch you some water."

It was minutes before he had run to his car, rummaged out a vessel of some kind, and made his way down to the creek and back, while Latimer held Perkins's head in his arms, and stared before him in a paralysis of despair. Busby dashed half the contents of the cup into the face of the unconscious man, waited a moment, and gave him the rest. The colorless lips trembled and drew down at the corners into a grimace that was half a smile, half a contortion of pain. The eyes opened and smiled faintly at Latimer and closed again.

"He'll be all right," said Busby and turned to go, hesitated, and returned. "See here. Suppose I run the car back. We can make him comfortable on the rear seat. I'll take him anywhere you say."

"You think he is well," whispered Latimer.

"Sure thing. I've been there myself. He'll wake up in a few mintues as good as ever. I am going for the car."

"You are sure, quite sure?" said Latimer.

"Don't you worry. It's getting pretty late."

"Wait a minute," said Latimer. With as little disturbance to the unconscious Perkins as might be, he divested himself of his coat, folded it and laid it down beside him. Very gently he raised his friend's head and shoulders and pillowed them on the coat, stooping over him to get reassurance of the freer play of breath through his partly opened lips. The limp arms began to show life in little tremors and twitches.

Yes, Perkins was coming round as Busby said he would. Busby! There stood that gross sack of debased flesh, the foul fighter, complaisant in his triumph, and on the ground—Perkins—

"Assassin!" screamed Latimer and threw himself at Busby, red with the desire to rend and smash and reduce that gorilla shape to the same prostrate helplessness. Latimer had not fought for near forty-five years, but he would not have used skill and experience if they were his. His soul cried for primitive vengeance. His hands clawed out at Busby's face but fell short and seized at the man's collar. There they fastened.

Busby staggered back under the swift assault.

"Let go! Let go, I tell you, old fool! Don't make me! Let go, damn you!"

For Latimer's fingers had clawed up an inch or two and gripped the throat. His head was buried in Busby's chest and his hands dug deeper and deeper under the blows that descended upon him from those mauling arms. His body swished from side to side as the giant, in pain and panic, struggled to shake himself free. He was aware of the blows on his head and ribs, but he did not feel them; or else it was the automatic reflex of his own pain that stiffened his fingers around the fat throat, with the rigor of a drowning man. Latimer's fingers were a vise which Busby's huge thrashings only screwed tighter around his throat. The rat man's strength oozed from him, the breath rattled in his throat, his blows became comic convulsions which spent themselves in the air. He sank to his knees with Latimer on top of him, clutched at those implacable hands, and went down.

Only then did Latimer loosen his grip. He sat down on the road, still unconscious of his own pain, and from an immense distance looked down upon the silent Busby.

"I have killed," said Latimer, and the words sounded in his ears as impersonal, as remote, as though he were conjugating the verb "to kill" in some foreign tongue. He rose, picked up the

aluminum goblet, slowly made his way to the creek, filled the cup, and returned to Perkins. Once more he sat down in the road, took his friend's head in his lap, and with a strange sense of certitude and expertship, forced the teeth open and poured in the water. Perkins's shoulders heaved, his eyes opened, fluttered a moment, remained open.

"I'm all right, Latimer," he whispered.

"Don't talk; rest," said Latimer, and Perkins, like a sick child being good, obeyed and closed his eyes.

"I have killed," thought Latimer, looking out into the dark, and this time it was not a foreign tongue he was speaking. A fit of trembling came over him and his tears fell on Perkins's face.

Ten minutes later, Manning and Margaret, scouting in the Ford for their lost visitor, came upon Latimer and Perkins kneeling in the road over a groaning, cursing form that was Busby. The girl cried out as the car lamps flashed on the horrid spectacle, but Manning was immediately forward on the brakes and out of the car. Precisely at the moment he reached the interesting group in the road, the immense Mr. Busby stirred, heaved himself up, and swore horribly.

CHAPTER XXVIII

MANNING'S LAST INNING

NEXT morning brought profound disappointment to Manning. For after the first glance of assurance that no harm had come to Latimer, there entered into the journalist the ghoulish hope that Latimer might show after-effects; oh, nothing serious, of course, but a slight nervous relapse, say, that would postpone the departure for the city a couple of days. With Latimer playing the gentle invalid for a few days in a rocking chair, what might not one accomplish? What questions, what doubts— It was really too good to be true, Manning trembled.

It was. The following morning Latimer rose earlier than usual and announced that he had never felt so well. An extraordinary sense of exhilaration, he said, made him fear whether deep down in him the primitive brute did not lurk, ready to leap forward and take joy in fierce blows and slaughter. Neither was Perkins much the worse for his ordeal. He would not hear of intruding on Latimer's last day, as originally planned out by

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Manning, and departed soon after breakfast with renewed pledges of box-seats for Latimer and his wife at the Broadway first night. The picnic for three in the woods came off according to schedule, a pleasant venture, indeed, with Margaret talking more than her wont, but the two men thoughtful under the prospect of separation.

As the sun was going down behind the hills Latimer came out on the porch with his knapsack.

"You have three quarters of an hour and we can make the station in twenty minutes," said Manning. "There is one thing that bothers me. I have been looking again into that book on like-mindedness."

"I always insist on being early for trains," said Latimer. "You can ask your question on the way."

When Manning drove up from the barn in that fiery Ford, Latimer was giving his last admonitions to Margaret.

"You are to bring father down with you, say, about the fifteenth of December, and you are to bring enough things to last you until after New Year's."

"Yes, Dr. Latimer."

"Including an evening frock. Mrs. Latimer is

fond of the opera. My own tastes run more to orchestral music, but we will arrange that."

"I can go with Mrs. Latimer, and you and papa can stay at home and talk," said Margaret.

He shook his head at her reproachfully.

"I don't like irony in the young, Margaret; and I don't like to be scrutinized too closely by young eyes—even if they are of your color of blue. We ancients have enough of our own past to rise up and keep us humble, without calling in our children."

"I am very sorry, Dr. Latimer," faltered the girl.

"If you really are, I forgive you; otherwise I shall resent it until I turn the corner. Good-by, my dear."

He kissed her and ran down the porch steps more hastily than the occasion called for. Manning waved his hand to the girl and the machine shot away.

"I must surely come back," said Latimer, turning to keep the house in sight as long as might be. "How much do you know of your daughter? Manning?"

"I have learned to know her quite well since I left the paper," said Manning seriously. He had slackened speed,—with all that time before them to

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make the four and a half miles—and drove with one hand on the wheel and his eye on Latimer, who was taking memory photographs of the road.

"I think I have found the answer," said Manning suddenly.

Latimer came to with a start.

"Answer? To what?"

"To America."

"You are to be congratulated," said Latimer very seriously; "and it would make me happy to think that I have helped. I know the Mannings have helped me."

"Oh, but you have. Do you recall what you said about the Melting Pot and about Slovaks, Bulgarians, Ukrainians."

"I have said so many things since I first met you, Manning."

"Last night, while I was putting my feathered seminary to bed, something came to me out of my old text books in American history; well, not text-books, but what I had read on American history, somewhere. Perhaps it was at college, though that is hardly likely. And it was something like this; that the history of the United States has largely been shaped by its frontier."

"That is quite true," said Latimer. "Whenever

the older settlements have threatened to go stale, under the influence of ease and wealth and Europe, there has come a fresh breath out of the West. You are sure we are making good time."

"Oceans of time, Latimer. But I meant something more tangible than this spirit of the frontier. I meant the actual stretch of river-valley and prairie and mountains, which the older settlements held in trust, you might say, for the future. I remember reading somewhere, for instance, that one of the—"

"Good lord, Manning, watch your wheel!" and Latimer clutched at the side of the car as the machine swerved, lurched to the side of the road, hesitated whether to get off the macadam altogether, and then under the persuasion of Manning's strong wrist went back to its course.

"That one of the reasons which kept the thirteen colonies from going at each other's throat after the Revolution, and brought about the Union, was the Northwest Territory. There it lay out in the dark, hundreds of thousands of square miles and somebody had to keep an eye on it. So they incorporated the United States."

"That historic theory is thirty years old," said

Latimer thoughtfully. "By this time it may have been abandoned."

"Don't say that," cried Manning, and turned piteously to his passenger, who immediately grasped the side of the car.

Latimer found himself divided between remorse and alarm.

"I was jesting," he said. "Of course the theory is still sound. Only keep both hands on the wheel."

"Well now," said Manning, "this family of thirteen colonies being held together by that big, raw, booming territory out there beyond the sunset, struck me very much like the situation one often finds in so many families; where there is strife and unhappiness, but they stick together."

"On account of the children!" cried Latimer. "My dear fellow, that's an inspiration."

Manning flushed to the peak of his cap.

"The Northwest Territory held the family together. And thirty years later when New England and the South were getting ready to bite each other another West came out to act as reconciler—Henry Clay's and Andy Jackson's West. The kind of treatment which this promising child handed the old folks wasn't what you'd recommend in the

Y. M. C. A., but it meant well, I dare say. Sometimes, you know, the family quarrel is about how to bring up the child. That's what happened with Kansas and slavery—"

"When did you think this all out, Manning?" said Latimer. He was seething with envy.

"Oh, I lay awake the greater part of the night."

"And we are still some distance from the station?"

"I'll get you there intact, Latimer. Now the point is this. Just as our West, born of all sections of the old colonies, fed with their blood, has been the bond and—"

The car which had been slowing up unaccountably, now fell to a walk, to a crawl, gasped, sputtered, and stood still.

"What could that be?" said Latimer.

"I wonder," said Manning, and tried the "guaranteed" self-starter several times without response.

"I'll have to take a look under the hood."

He pulled up the brake lever, and climbed out. Latimer pulled out his watch.

"What time do you make it?" said Manning.

"We have twenty-three minutes."

"Oceans of time," said Manning, his head down

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by the carburetor. "Do you mind lifting one of the lanterns and giving me a light? Thank you." He had brought forth something from the toolbox and was tapping away there in the dim interior. "Now what is America to the world? It is what the West has been to America. It is compounded of the blood of all Europe—" He stood up and Latimer could have sworn that Manning's eyes were aglow in the dark. "Think of it, Latimer," he whispered. "America, the offspring of Europe, in her the blood of every race—Latimer, she will be the reconciler of Europe. She will bring together and hold together a world that is torn and clawing and gone mad with panic and gall. Of course she is in the mess herself—"

"We will finish this on the station platform, Manning. Let us leave the machine and walk."

"Nonsense. I'll have her humming in a minute or two." But it was fifteen minutes before the engine started, when Manning, in his despair, cranked the engine by hand. During this quarter of an hour Manning developed steadily the vision of America the peacemaker, while Latimer agonized over the dial of his watch. Eventually the Ford did go, and well she might, with two and a half miles to make and seven minutes to do it in.

"Just what was the matter with her?" said Latimer.

"Flooded the carburetor, I guess, and while I've been fussing the engine has cooled so the rich mixture works. But, Latimer, even if we are caught in this nightmare of a war, it cannot be the same with us. The aftermath of hatred cannot last as long for us. The mists must vanish sooner. The old nerve strings will run again from the heart of America to every corner of Europe."

"Manning, I am not perfectly qualified to testify to your qualifications as a journalist and a chicken fancier, but as a poet—"

"There's your train, a mile and a half up the road," said Manning. "You can get your ticket from the conductor. And so, perhaps, it will be the melting pot after all. A country which God may use as the crucible for skimming off the hatreds and stupid fears of a world,—it is not a country to be ashamed of."

They ran up to the station platform and Manning jumped out with his guest's knapsack. The locomotive whistle screeched and the glare of the headlight was on the trees flanking the roadbed. Latimer put his arm around the other's shoulder.

"You overheard Margaret promise. You are

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coming for the Christmas holidays, if I am not up before."

"You've had a good time, Latimer?"

"I've met a good fellow. Will you write?"

Manning shook his head.

"I won't promise; I am inclined to think not. But you can do this, old man. Go out sometimes and buy the *Star*; and when the heads are more than an inch and a half high, think of me."

"Would you ever go back?"

Manning shivered, his hands opened and shut, and he moistened his lips.

"Get thee behind me, Latimer," he said quietly.

The train pulled in. On the car step Latimer turned for a final handshake. Manning's grasp held.

"And if it all should come true, Latimer, and Wilson moves into the Hague as the first Chief Justice of the World, then that other thing would grow clearer, too, wouldn't it? God, I mean, and all of it?"

"Good-by."

A little woman climbing into the next car with three children, one asleep in her arms, two dragging heavy-eyed behind, and a small mountain of

homely baggage, held the train for an instant. Latimer turned back on the car platform.

"What did you say was the matter with that automobile of yours, Manning?"

"Not a blamed thing, old man. Be good."

CHAPTER XXIX

SAFE IN PORT

THREE hours more, and Mary and home, thought Latimer, lowering himself into his chair, his eyes aching for the dark and his mind for rest and forgetfulness of what he was leaving behind. Mary: and at the name he was swept with a gust of remorse. What had his wife been doing these three weeks of hot weather in town while he had been feasting his soul? Why had he not written? She had ordered him not to, but it was an injunction he might have violated without undue consequences. Why had he agreed so readily to the assumption that it was from her, too, with the rest of the world in town, that he needed escape? Or if she insisted on his going away, why not have demanded in return some indulgence for herself? She might have spent these weeks on a holiday of her own among the New Hampshire hills of which she could never have enough. Absurd! He knew, of course, why she would not go away. She was on guard against the chance of a mishap to his own plans. If he

came back prematurely, she would be there waiting for him. Or she was waiting, there at headquarters, in case he needed her and called for her. And he— Shameful! Shameful!

And then he felt with awe that the sense of guilt was not crushing him. He was not as unhappy as he would have been over such a crime three weeks ago. Good Lord (he thought), what has happened to me? Have I cured myself too well? Have I cleansed away all capacity for moral obligation from my soul? Am I getting to be like Dawson, or Grimsby? A pagan, a faun, a hero out of Ibsen, a Frankenstein's monster? I am in sin (he wanted to groan, but he was too sound, too much at peace for even a passable imitation).

Ah, well! Mary would understand; and what she didn't she would pretend to. He had telegraphed to her and she would be waiting for him on the railway platform whence she had sent him away on his adventure, like a child perfectly equipped for holiday, with his bags, his books, his golf clubs, his—

Great heavens! He jumped up, glared around him and overhead, and saw only his solitary knapsack on the floor beside his chair. Where was everything else? His bags, his clubs, his litera-

ture? Where? Where? At Harriet's! But how—

"I am on the wrong train," he gasped in panic. "I should not be going home now. I promised Harriet I would stop over." And for the moment he was rent between the wild hope that it wasn't true, that he was indeed on his way to Harriet, and the impulse to clutch at the bell rope and bring the train to a stop, to explain—

Absurd, of course. He sank back into his chair, resigned. And yet, to have forgotten so completely after promising Harriet, to have tossed her out of his life as soon as her back was turned. It was to her he should have telegraphed that he was coming. His wife he was to have wired from Williamsport. Would Harriet ever forgive him?

"She will," said that new-born pagan conscience. "And what's more, she will send your luggage down by express collect." He shuddered at the quick equanimity with which he resigned himself to the inevitable. "What has come over me in these three weeks?" he asked. "Or rather I know what has happened, but how? Where did it begin? Let me, in defence of my moral and intellectual integrity, try to think it out."

For the next half hour he stared out of the win-

dow into the dark and thought of nothing. Ultimately he fell into a doze.

"Dr. Latimer!"

He scrambled to his feet and drove the sleep from his eyes and his brain by a mighty effort.

"Gladys! My dear Miss Winthrop! This is altogether delightful."

She offered him both her hands, made her choice of two seats in the long row of vacant chairs, and registered queenliness.

"Sit near me, Dr. Latimer. We finished the picture day before yesterday. One gets tired of the motor. So you find me here."

"And that scene?" he said.

"Your Alvarez to my Juanita? It goes of course," she said archly.

"Oh, no," he cried in agony.

Gladys laughed.

"If you are *very* good, and sit down and tell me *all* about yourself, I may use my influence to have it suppressed."

"What is there to say, my dear Miss Winthrop? It can be done in two words. I am coming back to town enriched with a vivifying experience. I have lost myself to find myself, if I may use the expression."

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"Indeed you may, Dr. Latimer."

"I have been emancipated from an exaggerated egocentrism. I have been reduced to my true proportions by the simple process of being thrown against the background of all outdoors. It has been a catharsis, Miss Winthrop, a veritable catharsis."

"It is just too fascinating, Dr. Latimer."

Fifteen minutes later Latimer was making fair progress with his two words of explanation when the train drew into Middleburg. It halted just long enough for two breathless women in walking skirts with knapsacks to swing aboard and into our travelers' car.

"Winifred, look!" cried Polly, and pointed.

"Oh, I say," remarked Winifred, and marched down upon Latimer. He gave them a hand each, beamed down on their browned and tired faces—Polly had a smudge under her left eye—and made them acquainted with his dear friend Miss Winthrop.

"Dr. Latimer has been telling me such delightful things about you," said Gladys.

"I've had a lot of your chocolates," said Winifred crisply, and both Latimer and the film queen wondered whether Winifred meant to be friends.

There was but one way out of the rather sultry atmosphere.

"You will be my guests in the dining-car?" said Latimer.

"I want five minutes to wash up," declared Winifred. "We ran the last mile and a half."

"And I kept telling her all the while there was plenty of time," said the pitiful Polly.

When half way down the platform he picked out his wife's face in the front rank of the waiting crowd, a place to which her diminutive stature entitled her by the law of common kindness. He waved his hat, and her slightly myopic stare gave way to a soft glow of recognition which made him feel that perhaps he had not sinned against her as greatly as he imagined. He bent down to kiss her, and so remained, that she might scan his face at close range and give her verdict.

"You look very well, Henry. I am thankful."

"And you?" He tried to find out for himself, but he had known her these thirty-five years and never yet been certain when she was well and when not.

"I have been very comfortable," she said and took his arm.

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"Next week, Mary, we go off to New Hampshire."

"That will be delightful. Where are your things?"

"Forgot them; at Harriet's." Then he became aware of his traveling companions. "My dear, may I introduce my friends? Miss Winthrop, Miss?—"

"Wilson," said Winifred.

"Miss?—"

"Griggs," said Polly.

Mrs. Latimer bowed and walked on. Latimer, saluting the three young women, fell into step.

"It is odd that you should have forgotten your bags," said Mrs. Latimer.

"I have left other things behind me, my dear."

"Yes?"

"A good part of my restless self."

"I am very happy," she said.

The flare of the city across the river was raw and menacing to his unaccustomed eyes. He was seized with a great yearning for the peace of the green mountain land which was now sleeping under the stars; though Manning and Margaret might still be sitting up, reading, talking of him perhaps. He hoped, sincerely, they were not miss-

ing him. And in the background, dim in the shadows, were Westville, the sick woman, Fairview, the hostess of the roadside booth—

"And Harriet?" said Mrs. Latimer.

He told her, with satisfactory detail; and after that he spoke of his own adventure, though only in outline, all the way across the river, and across town in the taxi, and up Broadway, as unlovely as ever with its wooden pavements and contractor's sheds in the effulgence of the whiskey signs. But after a little while Broadway was not so hideous after all. He caught its pulse. He began to identify the city, to place himself in it, as they sped on in silence.

"That third one—" said Mrs. Latimer.

He stared down at her. "Oh, Polly you mean. Yes?"

"She has a kind face."

THE END